GROWING UP IN THE VALLEY

Pioneer Childhood in the Lower Fraser Valley

Imbert Orchard

Sound Heritage Series

Cover: R. J. C. Henderson family of Chilliwack area, 1903. (Photo: Wells Centennial Museum, Chilliwack, B.C.)

Back cover: Farm family, name unknown, c. 1900. (Photo: Dusterhoeft Collection, Wells Centennial Museum, Chilliwack.)

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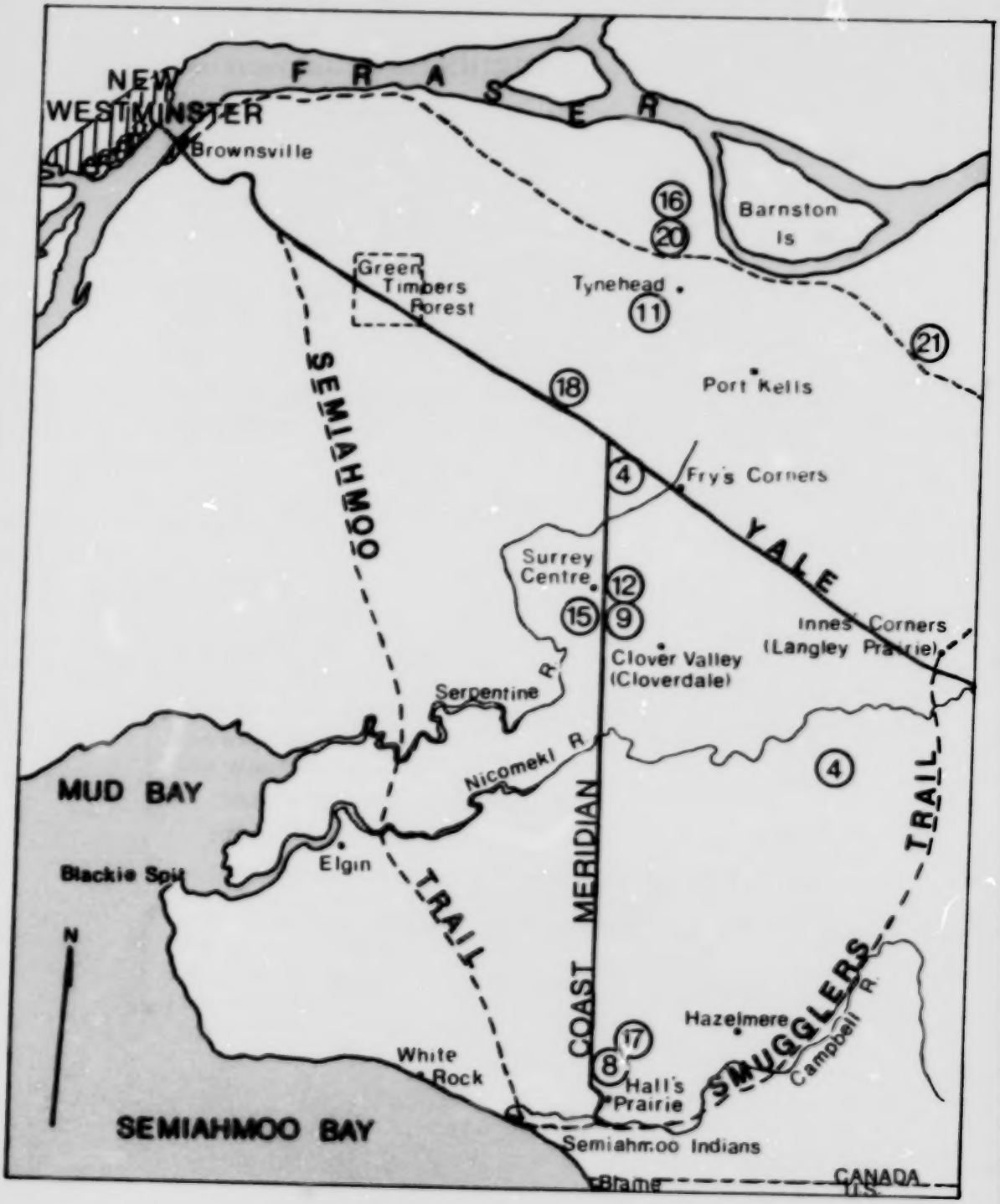
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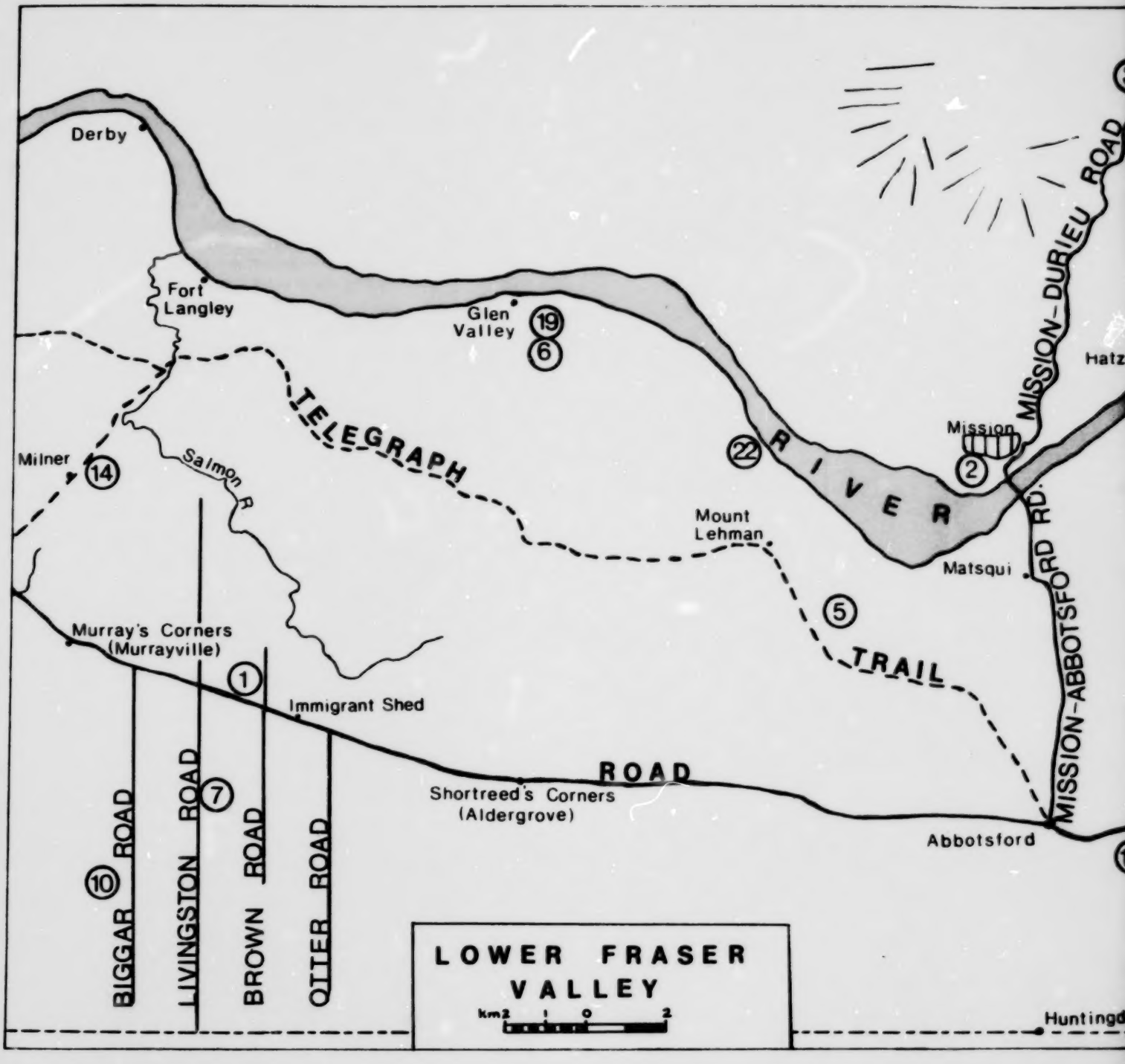
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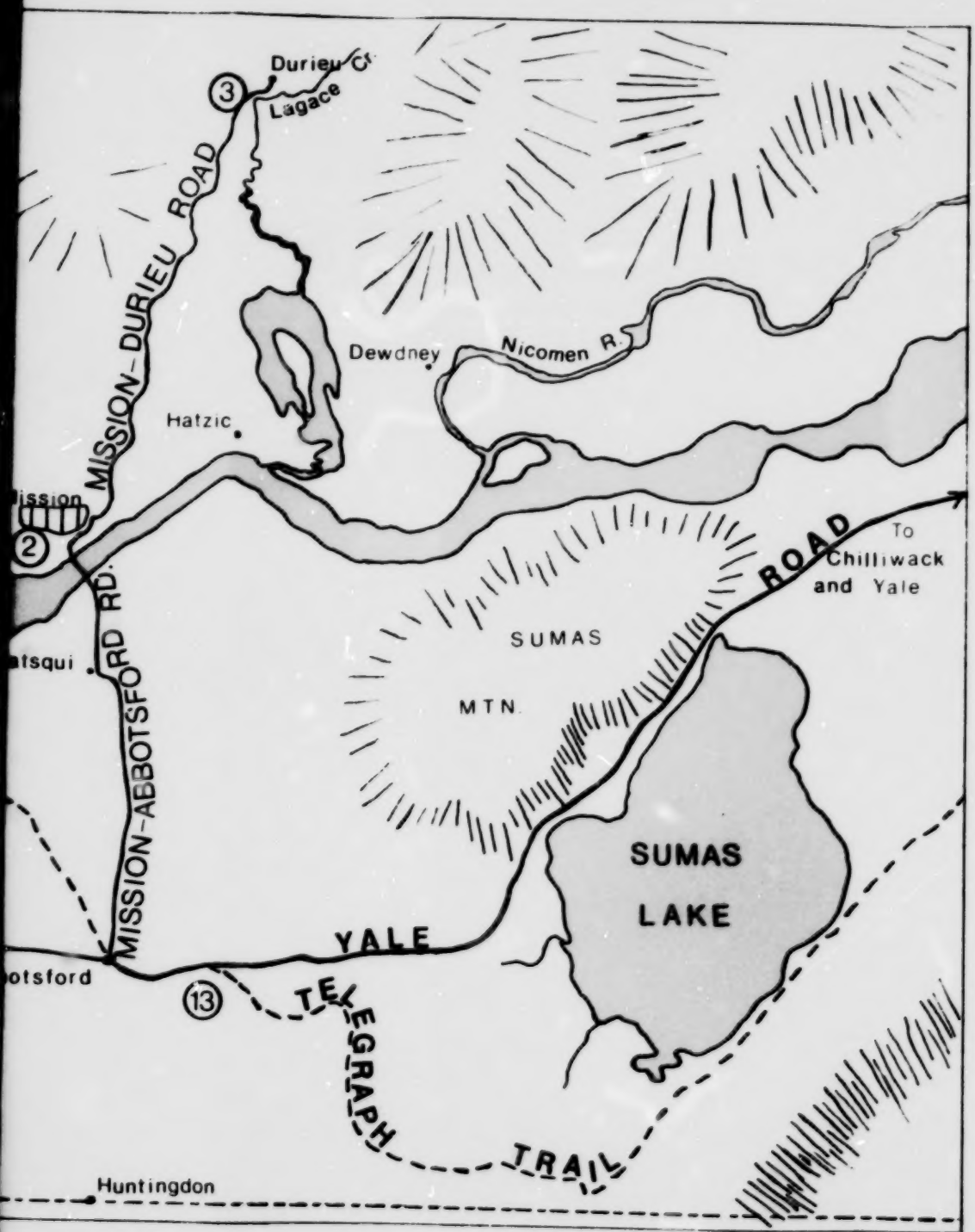
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PATTERNS OF THE VALLEY

In the days of the earliest settlers the Lower Fraser Valley was a vast forest, broken here and there by stretches of open prairie. The latter were islands, and other natural meadows, subject to flooding at high water.

It was there that the first farming took place. Around 1840 the Hudson's Bay Company started a farm on Langley Prairie in connection with the fort. Similar areas were settled twenty years or more later by miners, teamsters, and others from the Fraser River gold fields. By then the Pre-emption Acts of 1859 and 1860 had made it possible for anyone to take up land, and quite a few of them settled on the large accessible prairies around Sumas Lake and the lower reaches of the Chilliwack River. They brought in cattle from across the border and fattened them on the wild grass and the pea vine.

Although they had little or no clearing to do, they had to cope with annual floods, and hordes of mosquitoes that hatched out when the waters receded. This story is told in *Floodland and Forest* (Sound Heritage Series, No. 37)

By contrast, most of the people who concern us now pioneered the uplands of Surrey, Langley and Mission. They arrived during the 1870's or the two following decades, by which time all the suitable land had been taken up, and there was nothing for it but to move in among the firs and the cedars, which presented them with a very different challenge.

Access was by wagon roads or trails, meandering through dark woods and marshy bottom lands. Some had been made by Indians—like the one which ran from Semiahmoo Bay on the U.S. border to Brownsville, a small settlement and landing on the Fraser, opposite New Westminster. Another ran from Bellingham Bay to Fort Langley, the so-called Smugglers' Trail.

One trail had been cut in 1865 for a telegraph line that was to have been built all the way to Alaska, and then to Siberia. That it never got there is another story. But the trail itself was used by riders and pedestrians prepared to wade or swim any creeks they encountered. There were no bridges.

During the 1870's the new provincial government made an effort to open up wagon roads, beginning with the Semiahmoo Trail, which had already been improved by the Royal Engineers. In 1873 it was improved again. And during the next few years an entirely new road was cut through the middle of Surrey, Langley and Matsqui. It was known as the Yale Road, and from it settlers themselves constructed trails north and south into their homesteads.

About that time, too, the Old McLellan Road, as it got to be called, was cut from the top of Woodwards Hill on the Semiahmoo Trail to Langley Prairie; and a few years later the Coast Meridian was opened up from the Yale Road south to the border.

These so-called wagon roads brought the homesteaders into the very heart of the Surrey and Langley woods, and brought them out again when they went to New Westminster for supplies. But for several years they were hardly more than muddy trails that dodged the stumps and were at their best when frozen hard. Roads and bridges, however, were an immediate concern of the newly formed municipal councils, and many a settler found himself working on the roads in lieu of taxes. Bit by bit it became less difficult to move about, especially when they started using gravel.

Loggers and shingle makers also helped to open up the country. As with the farmers, they started at the water's edge and, as hand-loggers, worked their way along the banks of the Fraser and the smaller rivers. Pushing further inland, they built skid roads and brought in ox teams to haul the logs down to a river landing or a ditch they had constructed. From there the logs would be towed to one of the big mills near New Westminster, or perhaps to the one at Elgin.

In 1891 the New Westminster and Southern Railway was built from Brownsville, down through the middle of Surrey by way of Cloverdale and Halls Prairie, to link up with the American line at the border. By a system of branch lines, logging outfits were able to reach further and further into the Surrey woods. In 1903 a railway was run from Port Guichon, near Ladner, across the delta to Cloverdale, and four years later an extension was pushed up the valley to Huntingdon. This opened up much of Langley to the loggers, with the result that the woods seemed to be teeming with small lumber and shingle mills, and logging camps.

So for a time, logging and homesteading went hand in hand. Logging brought in cash. A struggling farmer could find winter work in the mills and camps, while his sons often got their first paid jobs as grease monkeys, greasing the skids. The camps might buy a farmer's hay or his oats, his butter or his beef, and sometimes his uncut timber. A later settler might find that the big trees had already been taken from his land, thus saving him some of the heavier work. But the stumps would still be there.

Farming and logging, together, changed the face of the land to such an extent that we hardly recognize in today's patchwork of farms and settlements, open everywhere to the sky, the raw countryside of less than a hundred years ago. When those who grew up in it try to tell us what it was like and how they lived from day to day, we seem to be travelling in an unknown country. Gone today are the great cedars and firs, the trails that wandered from clearing to clearing. Gone are the bear and cougar, the oxen, the jumpers, the riverboats. The prairies are dyked, the mosquitoes tamed. We are hard put to it to find even a relic of those pioneer days: the stump of a huge tree, a snake fence, a cabin built by some homesteader with his own hands. It was a wooden world, and it burned up all too easily.

What do remain are the patterns imposed on the landscape when trails became roads, clearings became farms, cross-roads became communities.

And memories remain. For the children of the forest seem never to have forgotten the wonder of it. We can hear it in their voices—in what they like to recall, in the way they tell about it. We can also sense how aware they are that the whole phenomenal transformation took place within a lifetime—their lifetime!

* * *

These memories of that growing up were recorded in the early 1960's, when there was air time and money for radio programs about early days in the province—and there were people who wanted to hear them. They were broadcast by CBC Vancouver as a series of 15-minute or half-hour documentaries.

As radio no longer seems to be an accepted outlet for our regional story, we must now find other ways of making it available to those who cherish it.

The material we have here is presented in two complementary parts. The first contains three autobiographical accounts of boyhood, each with its own cultural background. The first narrator was born in the border country of England and Wales. The father of the second was Irish, and his mother was a Nooksack Indian. The parents of the third were French-Canadian and came from the shores of the St. Lawrence. Interestingly enough, what they have in common is the coming of the CPR. Both Pete Lagacé's parents worked their way west with construction. Cornie Kelleher watched the surveyors lay out the right-of-way through his part of the Fraser Valley, and was given a ride on the construction train. The completion of the railway enabled Bert Williams' father to travel all the way to the Pacific and look for a place to settle his family. Later, he worked for the CPR as a stonemason in the Rogers Pass. The second part is a mosaic of childhood, arranged in sequence, according to topic. It tells us something of the variety of that growing up, along with its overall pattern.

PART ONE

A VALLEY BOYHOOD

THE BLUE JAYS OF LANGLEY

Bert Williams was four years old when his family started homesteading in the hill country east of the Langley prairie. They lived on what is still known as the Brown Road (240th Street), but it was then little more than a trail through the primeval forest. Here and there a settler was struggling to let in the sunlight and get a few acres on which to grow crops. Otherwise it was a world where humans were vastly outnumbered by bear, cougar, and deer.

Bert's parents, Charles and Emmeline Williams, came from Herefordshire. Bert himself was born there in 1884, and his speech never lost the musical cadence of the Welsh borderland. The family emigrated first to Ontario, where Bert's father, a stonemason and bricklayer, found plenty of work helping to build the large bank barns that were popular at that time. However, completion of the CPR drew his attention to the far west, and he and his bachelor brother-in-law, George Powell, came out to Vancouver to look around. Charlie continued to prosper. In those days a good stonemason could earn $10 a day.

Some time early in 1888 they called at the land office in New Westminster and found there were two adjacent homesteads in Langley available for pre-emption. They had been filed on and then let go. They were also reasonably accessible, being a mile or two north of the muddy track known as the Yale Road. The two men hiked out to take a look, liked what they saw, went back and filed on them. Then they sent for their families, which in George's case consisted of his father, John Powell, and his mother. They arrived in the fall of the year, and Charlie Williams' family lived for a short while in a little rented house in New Wesminster, close to the bush at the edge of town. Bert remembered seeing the chain gang from the jail, and it was there that he had his first encounter with a bear.

I was awful fond of animals, and I remember one morning going out and seeing this great big black dog. He was snooping around the dump there, and I goes over and tries to catch him. I was pretty near to him, you know, and he was looking around at me. And I could hear these men hollering, and Mother was calling. Finally, of course, she threatened me, and I knew I'd better stop; so I comes back. Uncle comes along, and he says, "Well, lad that's a bear."

A bear? I didn't know what a bear was.

The Immigrant Shed

We left Westminster on the 10th of November '89, on the old *Bon Accord*. It got up to Fort Langley late at night. I can remember that trip up the river: it was slow, stopping every once in a while to take on wood or put somebody off or somebody on. The Commercial Hotel and Pete Brown's hotel were in Fort Langley then. They were wide open, you know—bars and everything. Mrs. Towle, a widow woman, and her son George used to run the Commercial Hotel. That's right where the CNR runs through Fort Langley now. We stayed there the night. Then Dad hikes out the valley here to get a team—we had a little bit of

Previous page: Unidentified family on farm in upper Fraser Valley. (Photo: Dusterhoeft Collection, Wells Centennial Museum, Chilliwack.)

furniture. He gets a team and a light wagon, and we leaves here at 11 o'clock. It was November, and no gravel roads, remember—just trails and mud. Nine mile trip. Stuck in the mud. Dad ruined a good suit of clothes. It was 9 o'clock that night before we gets up there to what we called "the old immigrant shed."

Dad had found this empty house and we just moved into it. Somebody was looking after it, but anybody could go. There was a family of three upstairs, and we moved in downstairs. Grandmother and Grandfather and Uncle were there ahead of us. First we had to have a bit of supper; then us kids were put to bed, three of us in the bed, and I was put next to the wall. The lumber was green and you could shove your fingers through the cracks, and of course I was up on my knees looking through to where the old folks were having their cup o' tea and their beer, bread and cheese before they turned in. And I was taking it all in. It was new to me, and I wasn't tired. But presently my mother saw my eye, and that's when I got my first lickin' in Langley. Old country people are very strict, you know. I was put to bed to go to sleep, not for peeping around.

We used to call that house the immigrant shed. It was only a small place. A man by the name of Hannon had built it, right opposite where Otter school is now—a two storey rough lumber house. He'd cleared about an acre and planted a wonderful orchard. That would be about '84, I think. He was a married man, and that was a pretty lonesome place for a woman, you know. The old Yale Road was through, and he used to walk from there down to where Langley Prairie is now—that would be five miles—work all day, and walk back home. And his wife's there alone in the wilderness; and it *was* wilderness. It was all woods.

One night the fellow went home, and there was a note. She couldn't stand it any longer and she'd gone—left him. He never found her, never even knew where she went. He left the place then, sold it to a fellow by the name of Laidlaw, who lived in Westminster. You'd go in there if it was empty, and then you'd branch out and build your shack.

That's what Dad done. He built a house in there before the road was made. Well, there was a road down as far as Brown's. The Brown Road was named after the man who lived in there. He'd homesteaded about three years before. Then the road went on down almost a quarter of a mile to Norman's. From there it was just a bit of a trail.

Every 160 acres had a homesteader on it. Most of them were educated men. They'd been shipped from the old country for certain reasons. They were remittance men, who got their money every so often. But they were some of the finest men you'd ever know. And everyone had a little shack, a log shack mostly, throwed up and chinked with mud and straw or moss, or whatever they could get.

But Dad built a house. It wasn't log, it was split cedar. He slid the cedar out of the woods, and, dressed up, it looked like drop siding. Being a carpenter, he made his own window frames—he had all these tools—packed the glass on his back from New Westminster, made his doors, everything. The floor was a wonderful piece of art. The joists were hewed from saplings adzed off and levelled with a line. The boards were split from cedar, a foot or maybe sixteen inches wide, twelve feet long and as true as anything. They would be all edged and joined, then bored with a brace and bit and pinned; that's what held them down. After he'd gone over it with a carpenter's adze, it was as smooth as this floor. It was a wonderful house, you know.

Grandmother and Grandfather were across the road with Uncle, who'd built a nice log house, quite a comfortable place. And of course, after they'd built their homesteads, they got together and soon had a road in.

Living Off The Land

Dad was working on the CPR; he had a job there as a stone mason. You'll see these retaining walls on the CPR yet, up as far as Rogers Pass, Albert Canyon, Revelstoke—all through there; and of course we thought it was the other side of the world at that time. Then the snow would come, about eight foot deep in winter, and home he'd come and clear the land, grub out a few stumps, get an orchard planted, and that was the start.

If one of the trees was too big, you used to take an auger and bore a slanting hole down. Then you'd put a stick in that and get down on your knees and bore a draft hole until you could touch that with a stick. Then you'd get a fire going with vine maple or hardwood, you'd put the coals in the hole and blow and start a draft, and burn the trees down, those big ones. Most of the other ones, they'd just saw or chop them down. This was in the fall or winter or spring. You never done it when it was too dry because you had to watch it or a fire would start. But you'd go out there at night and see three or four great trees, all like torches; it was a wonderful sight. That stuff is worth hundreds of dollars today, but it wasn't worth anything then.

After they were down, our job was to supply wood, when we got big enough, my brother and I. There were so many trees there that we had to bore and burn when Dad was away. When they burned off we had a block of wood, and all we had to do was chop the black off it, so Mother wouldn't kick too much. We had a great big stove, it took a 30-inch stick, like four by four.

You had to figure everything out yourself, your own way. You know those block matches, those Chinese matches they had—they don't have them any more. They're about a four-inch by four-inch block, and that's all full of matches, all split down, and they're sulphur-tipped to strike. Well, a five-cent packet of that had to last a year, because you never used a match, only to light a fire. There was a little bracket on the wall, with slivers in it—pitch slivers, mostly—and you'd stick them in the fire and they'd burn. You'd light the lamp, put out the sliver and put it back again, and that's how we saved matches.

I always used to get up and light the fire, and this time Dad was away and we'd run out of matches. I hunted in Dad's old pockets, and I couldn't find a match. So, I just put on my pants. All you wore was a shirt and knickerbockers and a pair of braces to hold them up, and barefooted. Mother said, "What are you going to do?" Uncle was clearing the land, and he had a fire going. I said, "I'm going to take that little old shovel and go to Uncle's and get some coal." So I goes over there and comes back with a scoop of coals, and dumps it in, and there was the fire.

You'd go to a neighbour, maybe Brown's, and borrow a few matches until some money come from Dad to buy some more. That's how people got along.

When you'd got some of the trees off you'd find a patch, 15 by 20, we'll say—a patch with no stumps, just the logs around. You'd get in there, clear it and dig it up. And it used to grow wonderful stuff. Cabbage didn't do so good, but turnips and potatoes would grow good. That was mostly what we'd grow—and peas. When you couldn't get the stumps out, you just took a V-harrow and dragged it around with a horse or an ox, and made a mold; and that's where you planted peas. In the wintertime I've seen Dad thresh out ten sacks with a flail and sack it up. They were a grey cow pea, they called them, as big as the end of your finger. You don't see them any more. But, boy, they made good soup! That's what the Frenchmen used dow- -ast, I think. And then sometimes some oats, sometimes a little wheat—little patches. Well, it all went for feed. When you'd got a pig you could fatten it up—and you always had to get a pig.

You used to take this feed and you put it in two sacks, oats and peas, sew them up, put them over the horse and away you'd go, down to the old grist mill at Fort Langley. You could rise a horse down over the trail, over these gullies—no bridges then—get down there, and if the old man wasn't operating he'd start up his boiler and grind up your feed for you, if it were only a sack—sew it together again, put you on the horse, and away you'd go back home. When you came to a steep place, you had to fasten the sack to the horse's mane and slide off, and follow her on your hands a feet as best you could.

In spring the bracken was a wonderful source of hog food. You know how tender it is in the ends when it's growing. When you came home from school you had to pick that and boil it; then it was put in a barrel. And you'd mix in your shorts. You had to get that from Westminster, get it from Brackman-Ker for 90¢ a sack. So your hog feed cost you almost nothing.

Everybody had their hog killing in the fall. But you can't take and kill a pig yourself—scald it, take the hair off it and dress it. So three or four would get together, and each of them

had a pig to kill. You'd go and help them, and they'd come and help you. I remember Dad had a big 300-pound hog, and there was a board up, you know, to keep him in. And our next door neighbour, a little Frenchman, was leaning on the door. Well, the pig senses there was something going to happen, and he wants to get out. So he puts his nose under the door and lifts it up, the nails give way and out he come. And as the door went away, old Ben slides on to the back of the pig. And there he was, backwards on the pig, riding around through the bush for quite a while. Finally he fell off, and they had to lasso the pig to get it down. Couldn't kill it till the next day, because it was too hot.

When the pig was killed it was dressed, and hanged up till it got stiff. Then you'd cut it up, salt down your hams and your bacon, render your lard, and there you had it. And your neighbours that hadn't got no pig, they always had a piece of it. I'll bet you that out of that big pig, against you got it done, there was about a quarter of it given away to your neighbours, and to people miles away who didn't have anything, you know. And that's what it was like. If they had anything they shared it.

A wonderful source of food was the Salmon River—both of them: there was two branches up there. Some years before, the fellow that had the farm in between the two gullies undertook to build a dam, and they were going to float logs down the Salmon River to the Royal City mill at Westminster. But they didn't give it much thought, because it couldn't be done. They built the dam—a wonderful dam—and they had a roller on the floodgate. But the logs just went as far as the water carried them, and that was the finish of that. But the dam was there, and this spillway caused an enormous hole at the bottom, in front. Well, the trout coming up at this time of year—great big two-footers, four pounders or more than that sometimes—they used to come and they couldn't get up this spillway, so that the hole was full of them, and the creek below. Neighbours would gather there, maybe from three or four miles around, and Dad and us kids would be along, and they'd make a net; they'd get sacks and sew them all together. We children would have our gaff hooks, and we'd be running along the creek below, where the water was shallow, and pulling them out that way. But I only remember doing that three times, because the dam bust, you see, during high water, and that finished that. But it didn't stop us from getting down there and gaffing these trout. We used to split them open and put them down in salt. The same with the salmon. And when you wanted one, you'd take it down to the creek on a line, and hang it in the river where the water was running to wash the salt out of it.

The grouse were a wonderful thing at that time. They were that plentiful and tame; you could knock them over with a stick; they wouldn't get out of your way very much. I remember poor old Grandfather giving me an old double-barrelled shotgun—one he'd brought from the Old Country. He'd got too old to use it—I was his favourite—but of course I was too young to use it then. But after a while—oh, I was awful careful you know—I'd load it with powder, a little shot, and then a wad of paper, and put the cap on and away I went, so I'd get a grouse. But the thing was to get enough money to buy shot or powder.

I remember one time coming out of the gully—I'd got four beautiful grouse, and I only had one load left, and that was in the gun. I had powder and caps, but I didn't have no shot. So I came up out of this gully, and a bunch of grouse went up right close, in the small alders 20 or 30 feet away. I nailed one, you must always shoot the bottom one first. He'll fall down and flutter around, and the other won't fly away; they'll be wondering what was wrong with him. Well, here I was, and no shot. So I puts the powder in, I loads her up and I goes back to a little gravel cut, and I picks up little stones, and I use that for shot. And I got two more before they went.

If we didn't get them that way, we got them with bows and arrows—make the arrow, you know, and then get a nail, drive it in there, cut if off and sharpen it, feather the ends. My brother and I have gone out and got six in an afternoon with bow and arrow, and that's a fact.

When Dad got home in the wintertime, he'd go out with a shotgun. He had a 16-gauge shotgun that come from the Old Country; and he'd load up some shells with buckshot and go out and get a deer. Then you always had your pig. And that's how we got along.

The wild fruit, of course, grew in profusion. The wild blackberries grew bigger than the tame blackberries do today, and we used to go out and pick 20 pounds in a morning, and

put that up for fruit. And then the huckleberries, up where Otter school is: there was a whole hill there with nothing but huckleberry bush. You'd go up there and you'd pick three or four water pails full in a day. That's how we got the fruit.

Wildcats

Somebody was going to shoot a dog. Dad was like me, he liked animals, and he brought this bitch home, and it wasn't long before she had pups. Dad had made a hole under the house where the dog could go in, and she had her pups there. So this night my grandmother had come over and had supper with us, and one of these homesteaders—Tom Graham, it was—called in. They used to call in to see if they could fetch anything from the store—mail or anything. They'd walk down to Murrayville; that was four miles from our place, and they had a mile or two miles to walk home. Tom had called in and brought something for mother, and of course Mother made him stop and have supper. And Grandma was going, and I wanted to go home with her. Just as we got outside there was a terrible noise. If you ever heard a panther scream, it's like a baby crying—terrible. He was just a few yards away. I remember Grandmother calling into the back door, "Emily," she says, "come here. There's something making a noise like an Old Country fox, only worse."

This fellow came out and he said, "Oh, that's a panther." He had to go another mile through that bush, but Mother wouldn't let him go. So she took my sister and Grandmother across to her place, and Tom slept with myself and my baby brother, and there wasn't much room. Well, this panther made a hole under the house big enough for him to get in. But as soon as he'd go to come in, the dog would nab him and he'd back away. Then he'd be at it again, and he kept that up till daylight. And in the morning the sill was covered with blood. She'd fought him off.

Our hunters were the Murray brothers, John and Bill Murray from Murrayville. They had their own .44-.40 rifles, Winchesters. That was the highest powered gun in the country at that time—well, almost. They used to have these hunts to hunt these wildcats. So we were sent off down to tell them about it. As they were coming up with the hounds—of course we were with them—the hounds took the scent. He'd gone right out the Brown Road and into the swamp where Hill Top is, on the highway going towards Aldergrove. (We used to pick cranberries there every fall.) Well, they went in there, and they got him and brought him out. And his fur was all chewed up from this dog. He was a big fellow. He measured 9'6" from his tip to his tail.

The homesteaders that had teams used to look after other homesteaders. They were real gentlemen, most of them. I remember one fellow by the name of Archie Beaton. He rode a little horse and if he was going to Westminster he'd go around to these homesteaders to see whether they wanted anything from town. If they had any money they'd give him their money and their note, and he'd bring it and leave it at the end of the road; and there it would stay until you fetched it. Nobody would ever touch it; your name was on it, and that's all that mattered, them days.

I remember this night we were to go out to see whether Archie had got back. Sure enough, here was the stuff at the end of the road in this box. I think we were short of matches or something, I forget what; but anyway we got it and were coming home. Of course, it was only a trail through the bush; and as we were coming along something was following us. We'd stop, then go on for a piece; then we'd step off to the side, and we'd see eyes shining. He followed us right down to the gate. We were telling Dad about it, but nobody seemed to care, you know, because they never tackled anybody. A little while after, oh, did he start howling. Of course, that was another trip down to the boys to tell them there was a panther around. And they got it away down the Salmon River this time. They always used to get them.

There was two kinds of wildcats: a big one and a little one. Everything had to be shut up—vermin-proof. Well, the first garden we had, Grandmother and Mother and my older sister, they were out, digging it up. I was supposed to be picking up something, you know,

helping. My grandfather was a smart old codger; he'd smuggled a crate of chickens all the way across the continent on a colonist car: Plymouth Rock hens and a rooster. Well, these chickens were picking around on the clearing, and there was a big log there up off the ground a little, and all of a sudden something come up over this log; and it had one of these hens. Grandmother, she was right there; I can see this old black dress, yet, that the ladies used to wear them days right down to the ground. As he went under this log, she put her hands on it and jumped over, right on top of him, and he went right through the front of her dress—a great big fellow. You could hear him going down through the bushes. He left the hen, but it was a fright. Well, gather it up—it wasn't badly hurt; the crop was ripped—take it to the house, sew it all up and doctor it. And the hen was all right.

The Little Bear

You could go down to what they call Whatcom: it's Bellingham now. It took a day to go down with the team, and another day to come back, and the roads were in such a shape it would be midnight before you'd get back. You could buy a lot of things down there half the price than what you could in Westminster. Like sugar was cheaper, molasses was cheaper, clothes was cheaper. Once in a while Dad would pick up and away he'd go for to take a trip. Well, he was going down through the Nooksack Valley on towards where Lynden is, and there was some black Angus cattle, and he saw this little bit of a calf running around along. He thought, that's not a calf. He was watching it; and it was a little cub bear. The mother had been shot, and it was looking for its mother amongst these cattle. Just as he came along, it crossed the road in front of him. And he stopped and run up and caught it. It fought a little bit, but it soon tamed down. He put it in a barrel he had and took it on to Whatcom. He got milk there and fed it bread and milk. He could have sold it half a dozen times, but he wanted to bring it home.

He never said anything about it when he come home, and we was waiting up. He put the team away, and Mother had supper ready for him, and when he was all finished he said, "I've got something to show you." Out he goes, and comes in with this little bit of a bear in his arms, the prettiest little thing you ever saw. He puts it down, of course.

Well . . . . A bear!

He started wandering around, and one thing and another. And in them days if you had cats you had to keep them inside or the animals would get them. And the old cat had the bottom drawer of the bureau. It was pulled out crossways so she could go in. And the bear goes sniffing around in there. Of course the paw comes up and give him a little dab, and of course he comes over to me crying, and he climbs up. And, oh, I was lovin' him, you know, and he licked my face. Oh, what a wonderful little thing it was.

So then Mom says, "Charlie, what are we going to do with him at night?"

"Oh," I says, "Can I take him to bed with me? I'll look after him." I had a little room downstairs at this time, that was before the top part was built on.

Mom says, "I don't know. He'll want to go out."

I said, "I'll look after him, I'll look after him." I wasn't afraid of him.

So I took him to bed, and down in the bed, you know, it was warm for me, but too hot for ***him***. He was uneasy, and he wanted to get out.

So he'd be on top of the bed and curl around and around. Then he'd lie down and cry and cry. Finally, I'd put my hand out to him and he'd stop and go to sleep. Then I'd go to sleep, with my hand on the bear. Well, in the night he'd want to go out and he'd start moving around, and I knew. I'd lift him down on to the floor, open the door and let him out—it was right on the ground floor. And he'd run around and do what he wanted to do, and back he'd come. I'd lift him up on the bed; then I'd get into bed, and he'd go to sleep. That went on for days and weeks.

He grew very quick. They grow very rapidly, a bear does. So he got too big, and we had to have him in a place out in the woodshed. You couldn't let him run wild. In the daytime we had him staked out with a light chain and a collar. And he used to go round and round, hour

after hour. Some of the brothers didn't like him. They were afraid of him, you see; and an animal knows. I could do anything with him, even after he got big I could. We used to catch mice for him. You know, you'd throw a mouse in there, and he'd go and he'd smell it. If you found one that was dead he wouldn't touch it; he'd dig a hole and bury it. If it was fresh, he'd put his little paw on the nose of it, and a couple of swipes of the other paw, it was skinned. Then he'd squat down and eat it. The offal, the piece he didn't want, he used to dig a little hole and put it in and cover it up. They're a wonderful thing, animals are.

It went on and went on until he got bigger than a big dog. Well, they were starting to wonder. Dad said, "We can't let him loose now, somebody will shoot him." We didn't know what to do. He pretty near scratched my brother and little sister, and I was afraid he would eventually get cross and do something.

Our neighbour Harry Hyde used to work on the Empress boats that used to come in from Japan. He was a longshoreman. And one of these boats come in one time with a young Scotch lad on it. He'd come from Scotland to buy a bear. Of course Hyde knew Dad had one, so he brought him up. The bear wouldn't have much to do with him, because he was afraid of him. But I could go out and fool with him and wrassle with him and everything, and never a bite—because I had to feed him.

However, he said, "I want to buy that bear, Charlie."

Well, Dad, you know, he was sort of a humane man. He says, "That bear's life's not mine," he says, "I can't sell him. But," he says, "I'll give him to you." He was glad to get rid of it, in fact.

"That's all right. But, Charlie, I want you to make a cage." He had to have two compartments, a place for him in the daytime and a place for him to sleep.

Well, Dad being a carpenter, a cabinetmaker and all that, he made a wonderful thing for him. And the fellow wanted to give Dad $50. No, he wouldn't—just $15 for making this crate. We took it down to the boat. "Charlie," he said, "I want to give you some more money." But Dad wouldn't; he was obstinate. And he needed it, you know. I was watching this fellow walking up and down, and I saw him put something in Dad's pocket, but I never said nothing; I kept quiet. Then we come home, and I think it was after supper Dad put his hand in his pocket and here was a roll of bills, and it was $50 extra!

"Upon my soul, Em!" he says, "that lad slid that in my pocket and I didn't know it. Well, it's too late now." But he was glad of it.

So that was the last I saw of the little bear. I could have shot a bear lots of times when I've been out hunting, but I would never shoot a bear.

The Bear and Uncle

There was a beaver dam away up on that hill, and of course that was the start of the Nicomekl. The dog salmon, the red salmon, all sorts of salmon, used to come up there in the high water in the fall. Of course, that was the bear's natural food before he hibernated. Harry Hyde brought a rifle from the Old Country: a .45-.75—a great, heavy bore, heavy rifle; it had a shell as big as my finger. Whenever they'd move out they'd leave everything at Mum's. Mum would look after it in case somebody would steal it, or a bush fire would burn it up. So Uncle comes along and he says, "Em, lend me Harry's rifle. I'm going down to the creek to see if there's a bear fishing."

So he goes down to the Nickomekl, and sure enough here was a bear dabbing out these salmon. He'd pull one out, it didn't suit him, he'd get another one. One that was spawning was what he was after. Uncle, of course, ups and bangs at the bear, and he wounds it just enough to make it bleed. I guess he was too far away. Then he starts following it; and this same dog that we had, she wanted to go with him, but he sent her back. So she followed him at a distance.

Well, he followed this bear and lost track of it; and he walked up to where a tree had fallen one way over a knoll, and another one fallen across it. He got up there and was looking around; and all of a sudden something stood up and grabbed for him. It clawed him in the

neck, took the skin right off, right to the jugular vein. He jumped back, struck the bear with the rifle and broke the stock off it. But he always carried a little .38-calibre revolver in his belt when he went hunting; so he pulled his revolver, and his first shot broke the bear's arm. When the dog heard the shot she got in close, in behind the bear, and she would grab him, and he would turn around to fight the dog. Then she'd be away until he'd get set again. Finally, about the third shot Uncle got one into his neck and killed him, but not before this loose arm that the bear was throwing around had caught him on the side and taken the skin off, bare to his ribs. Yes, sir! I remember that. When Uncle came back I was home from school, and I can see poor Mother sewing this here skin, him wincing; sewing it up again, and fixing it. No doctor. There was no doctor nearer than Blaine. But he got all right and there were no effects.

Another time he was going to see his best girl, and he had one of these little railroad lanterns, and he always carried this revolver with him. As he was going along the trail, there was something in the ditch making a racket. He turned the lantern to see what it was, and it was one of these little wildcats that had got a grouse. It jumped straight at him and took the whole side out of his Sunday-go-to-meeting pants. Of course, he shot it, and went on to see his girl, and took it with him as a trophy. He was quite a hero for a while. But he never married her; I don't know what happened.

Neighbours

Mother was adapted to this kind of life. She was a very religious woman, and when you have that you have everything. Them days preachers were few and far between; but once in a while they used to come out. Sometimes the Salvation Army would come out and they'd have a service. They used to gather at different places—one that had the biggest house—for a Sunday afternoon sing, and sing these old Moody and Sankey songs with a swing to them. And these were educated men, these homesteaders, and they could sing all the different parts. Today we get stuck on this here TV, and that's only caterwauling to what you'd got then. You heard music that thrilled you and went through you, and you enjoyed it.

Because Mother was very religious, we had to go to church; and if we didn't know the text when we got home we'd get no pie for dinner. And I'd coach them—but sometimes I'd forget it myself. You went to church to listen, and of course as soon as you'd got the text, that was all: you'd memorize that, but you never knew what he was talking about. Well, this poor old Mr. Brown he used to be our Sunday School teacher. And he hadn't had much education. Things in the bible, you know, like the cleansing of the lepers; he didn't used to call them lepers, he used to call them "leepers." Well, comical kids like us, we could imagine things, and we'd start laughing and giggling. Another time he was reading about the leopard and he'd call it the "lee-o-pard." And that, of course, would tickle your fancy and you'd never forget it.

Mother would go to church, and I wouldn't let her go alone; and we used to walk. It was two miles there, two miles back. After we moved it was four miles up and four miles back, and we hadn't got no buggy. Then after church the Browns would say, "Oh, you'd better come in and have a bit of lunch with us." So we used to go in and have dinner. And I remember the old fellow always used to ask a blessing. That's what used to amuse me. He'd sit at the table and he'd say, "Lord, sanctify this food for the use of our body, for Christ sake, pass the potatoes." It used to strike me so funny, then Mother used to scowl at me for laughing. I couldn't help it, and that's a fact! I remember one time he was sitting down at dinner and the cows had got in the orchard and he had a dog, and he got up and called the dog and he was cussin' these cows to beat the band, you know, just after saying grace and teaching us at Sunday school. Oh dear! But, oh, he was a good fellow, a great neighbour. He was of Portugese descent, I believe. Wonderful man.

I remember when Browns got a couple of cows; that's before we had any. And of course it was hard times. Mother didn't know what she was going to get us for supper. We had flour and brown sugar, we used to get that by the barrel—that had to last a year—and that was

about all we had, really. And Mother said: "If you go out to Mrs. Brown's, maybe she'll give you some milk." So we took a little pail out to get some milk—a lard pail. Mrs. Brown, she'd been churning. So when Mother turned the milk out, here was a big hunk of butter, more than a pound, not done up, just on the bottom of this pail. That's what they were like.

Then Mother takes this milk and she makes us up—she used to call it "hasty-come-stick." It was a cooked flour, and something she used to put in it to make it taste a little. She'd boil it, and you have that and brown sugar, and, man alive, you could eat a lot of it and it stuck to your ribs. It was done quick, it was hasty and it stuck to your ribs: hasty-come-stick, that was it.

You'd call at some place and it was dinner time. You couldn't get away; all they'd have was just potatoes and carrots, and sort of a gravy that the women would make up. That was your dinner. You enjoyed it and thought nothing of it.

Of course, if anybody got hurt, everybody was there to help. A man, come haying time, if he got sick, you'd leave your own hay and go and put his in. That was your neighbour. I remember an old fellow telling Dad, you could do without your brothers and sisters, but you couldn't do without your neighbours; and I thought how true it was. And it's true today.

A woman would be sick three or four or five miles away, and they would go and nurse her and look after her, take turns. Us kids would have to go down to the creek with our fishing lines and catch some of these small trout, and they'd fix them up—something to take. They'd try to get them to eat. Many the time I've walked with Mother, and I could hardly walk home, I'd be that tired.

* * *

Mr. Porter used to have the blacksmith shop at Murrayville, and he was one of the finest men you'd ever seen. He had a big family. And when he was running the shop there, I always wanted to be a blacksmith. That's the reason, when I got my own team I used to do my own shoeing and all that. Dad had got his team and one was balky. The black mare had to do most of the work. So this morning at breakfast time Dad said, "Lad, I want you to take Doll down to Mr. Porter and have her shoed on the front feet." He was going to do some work. Well, that was all right. He didn't tell me to come right back with her, which I very much appreciated, because when I got down there it was the old bellows, you see, and to see these sparks flying and him making thins and shoeing horses, it fascinated me. I sat there and I pumped that thing, and it come noon.

He shod the mare and tied her up, and said, "There she is, Bert", he says, "Your Dad might want her." I said, "I don't think so. He didn't say he did."

I sat there, and dinner time came, and he went to dinner. And he come back and I was still there, and all afternoon. And he'd tell me two or three times, you know, that I'd better go. So, it come dusk, you know just twilight. And all of a sudden an apparition came in this doorway, and it was my Dad, and he was a big man. When he got mad he was mad. He looked at me, you know, and I was scared. I was feeling the hair tingling up the back of my neck, and I knew what I was in for.

Mr. Porter goes up,—he knew Dad well—and he puts his hand on Dad's shoulder and said, "Oh, Charlie, I'm so sorry, you wanted that mare. The lad didn't know, we just this moment tied her up. Just this minute finished her."

"Don't be bothering about that, Garge. That's all right. I knew there must be something."

Well, I looked from one to the other, and of course he untied the old mare and give me a leg up, and I rode home and *he* walked. I never forgot it. And any time in my life—I'm getting on now—if I ever had a chance to tell a white lie to help a kid out of a scrape, I've done it, because I appreciated that so much. You know, it was just on the spur of the moment. He just knew I would get a good lickin', and he didn't want me to have it. That's what the people were like.

I remembered we'd lost a steer, on a Saturday, and a brother and I were hunting for it, barefoot, somewhere over where the municipal hall is now. A man by the name of Isaacsen

had a dandy orchard there; and when the apples was ripe, these Gravenstein apples, they were dropping on the ground. We saw these apples, and of course you could get through his fence. So we goes in there and gets some, and we was getting back through the fence, and my younger brother got stuck. And the old fellow comes along, he was a Swede, and I'll never forget him tell us, "Now, boys," he says, "you're not stealing those apples, they was just wasting there, that's not stealing them," he says, "But it would be far better if you'd come and ask me. I would give you the big ones." Gee, well, that makes an impression on a kid.

Another time an old mare had got away. That was a horse we'd borrowed, and she'd come down to the prairie. We was tracking her, and, of course, we were barefooted. All we wore then was just our knickbockers and a shirt. We were hiking along; and there was a family living right opposite there, where the airport is now,—a big family. The young fellows there went to the Boer War after, I remember. And we called in there to see whether they'd seen her. One lad come to the door, and he says, "Yes, lads, I saw her yesterday down by the English church, down across the Nicomekl," he says. "She was in a field there." So we thanked him and we started off. Then the door opened again and he called, "Wait a minute, boys!" And he comes out with a piece of something. It wasn't a plate, it was a big piece of pie—not a little piece of pie, quarter of a big pie, a currant pie. I never tasted anything so good in all my life. He figured two kids like us, it was past dinner time, they must be hungry. That's what people were like. We goes down, we finds the old mare, and we both gets on her and rides home.

* * *

There was the Seeley brothers. If ever there was characters, there was two. They had this little house, and their mother was alive then—a little bit of an old woman who came up from the states somewhere. She was very old, and she used to smoke a little clay pipe. Tom used to work in the camps and bring home money, and George would stop home and clear land and potter around.

Just below the Otter school they'd found a bee tree. A cedar had come up, and there was a hole and bees had made a nest: wild bees, you know. They'd blocked the hole to keep the bees in; they was going to take it home on a jumper. They sawed it off, but they sawed it too close. George got out of the way, but Tom didn't, and they were on him, and all that saved him was he was a great tobacco chewer and smoker, and one poison counteracted the other. They were stinging him all over the stomach and everything. And there he was, out in the road with his braces down and his pants down, killing the bees and getting them out of him, when along comes this little old Scotch lady—she used to talk Gaelic. She says, "What's the matter, Thomas?" And she was helping him to get rid of these bees, and taking no notice of how his pants were down. Us kids come by, coming home from school, and that's how we knew about it.

A fellow made them a great big hive, like a dog kennel. But they were afraid to take honey out of it. So one Sunday my brother and I and the neighbour boy, we decided that we were going to raid it. George had come from church, and gone down to Browns' for dinner. So we knew where he was. We hit across through the bush, and we broke into the hive. We had a veil and gloves and a tin, and we got this here tin full of honey, and went down the field eating honey. And the three of us were the sickest dogs . . . . I couldn't look at honey for years. And George was telling people that a bear had been at it.

* * *

We had to make our own fun, you see. Some of it was pretty crude at times. I laugh lots of times when they talk about delinquents. Gosh, we used to do a lot of things that we shouldn't have done.

Mother used to get chickens, and we had a lot of these big roosters around. Well, our specialty was to get a string about 10 to 12 feet long, tie a piece of pork fat on each end of it, then throw it to these young roosters. One would get one piece and the other would grab the

other piece, and away they went; one would lose it, and we'd be laughing. Mother thought that was awful, and she give us a really good licking for it.

Then in the spring of the year, of course, everything starts up. The neighbour boys would come over, and we'd chase each other around with a rag tied on a stick; get it all in the mud and drip and everything. This time Dad and Mum had gone out to the neighbour's, and some of the neighbour kids were at our place, and we were having a whale of a time. I'd got a nettle, and I'd stung my brother pretty bad, and Leonard was going to get even with me. He goes up to the chicken house, and drags this here rag over the chicken roost. Then he was watching for me, waiting for me. Well, the fellow that Dad went to see wasn't home, and he'd come back. It was dusk, and as he come around the corner of the woodshed, Len gives him a dab with that rag right across the face. Dad has a heavy, big black moustache.

"Tol-tol! tol-tol! What's going on here?"

Well, of course, we scattered like chickens. When we went in the house, Dad was lying on the sofa. Then Mom came home, and the lamp was lit.

Dad says, "Can you smell anything, Em?"

"No."

We always kept a lot of cats. Sometimes they'd get in the house, so Dad and Mom pulled this lounge out, and they were leaning over it together to see where this smell comes from, and Mom saw this on Dad's moustache. Oh, dear oh dear! Poor old Dad went and scrubbed and scraped. Then he was looking for us, but we were gone to bed.

I took after my mother. I was always happy, and I could sing on a different tune from morning to night, or whistle them. I used to play the mouth organ by the hour. But we never used to drink, and I never danced; Mother figured the violin was the devil's instrument. But after I got one, I played the mandolin and violin.

Of course, I never had much school. I had to stop home to work too much. But for geography, I can travel around the world yet. Our teacher was a wonderful man. He'd point to the map, and he would sing it, you see; and he'd repeat it twice. We'd go all around the whole world. So geography was nothing to us.

The Low-lying People

Everybody broke every law there was. You'd shoot deer out of season. In the wintertime in the snow is about the only time you could track down and shoot them. But for other laws, there *was* no laws that I remember. You didn't go around destroying property or anything like that. There was no cars for to get in collision. So taken as a whole, it was very peaceful. Once in a while you'd hear of somebody having a falling out. But the next time you see them, they were arm in arm and it was all forgotten. They *had* to live together in them days.

But down in the low-lying country it wasn't so much harmony. Of course, we didn't go down there very often. We'd be barefoot, and the roads were terrible to walk on; and we'd be afraid of them, of doing something that they would get after us for—until we got older. We'd not met the people, but we'd hear these stories about them fighting and shooting and trying to do one thing and another to each other; and we were naturally, like kids would be, leery of them.

Down there was a dead end road where there used to be a skunk cabbage patch, and the hogs would go and live there on the grass and stuff around the creeks. They called it Hog Alley. And these pigs would have a certain mark; some had slits in one ear, and some in the other. But this fellow figured he'd be smart; he had no mark on his at all. If he got a pig without a mark on his ear, that was his. Well, when he came to gather them up in the fall, he didn't have very many pigs: somebody had caught and marked them.

There was black pigs, red pigs, spotted pigs. You'd see a spotted pig in somebody's yard—well, by Judas Harry, that's my pig! Then there'd be a fight. You'd see some of them coming along with their horses, and meeting on the road. They'd have their whips and slash at one another. And there was fighting and feuding, and half of them wouldn't speak to the other half. How he used to laugh about it.

Well, the old fellows died off, and when they started shipping milk, they had to more or less join together. One would haul the milk to Cloverdale this day, and one would haul it the next day; and through that, this feuding all died out.

But we called them the "low lying" people. We had to get back at them a little because up on the hills we were what they called the "blue jays." That was "blue jay country". There were hundreds of them up there. They'd carry your spuds away and your peas. We had to shoot them.

* * *

At Fort Langley there was only a blacksmith shop, jeweler, a grocery store, and two saloons—hotels, they called them. You could buy a bottle of whisky for a dollar and a quarter, and cheaper stuff for a dollar. It was wide open. And the cemetery was there.

At the old fort, there were two buildings at that time; but they pulled one down and made a pig pen out of it, I believe; and one was used for a barn. Part of the stockade was there along the bank, all falling down. Nobody cared, I suppose. Somebody had rented it, and afterwards there was a house built.

There was a wharf, and stuff would come up on the old sternwheelers—the *Hattie Young* or the *Beaver*, or the *Favourite*—whatever boat was running. Your stuff was left up on the wharf, and then you went down and got it.

I remember one time—I was maybe 13—going down with a team. The boat hadn't come in. I'd heard it whistle way up somewhere. So I'd tied the team up and walked back by the Commercial Hotel. I stood there looking in, and there were fellows in there drinking and having a good time. Of course, we never dared to go in a place like that—we'd be skinned alive—but you couldn't help look. This little fellow—I wouldn't mention his name, I knew him after—they had picked him up, and they was holding him by the legs and shaking everything out of his pockets, and then picking up his money. Then they give some of it back to him, and bought drinks with the rest. Well, he was half shot himself.

I couldn't figure out what was the matter; and when I asked Mum later what they were doing, "Oh," she says, "I don't know. You'll have to ask your father. I don't know what they were doing."

I asked Dad, and he says, "Well, I guess they was shaking him down." I didn't know what it was to see a drunk man.

Travellers

If you wanted to go down to Westminster, you had to walk down to Fort Langley five miles away through the bush, and wait for a boat. I remember one time—I was just a kid—I had to go to town to do some business for Dad, some message I had to give Judge Bowell, something to do with the law. Anyway, I went down and talked to the old gentleman, give him the message. Then I had to stop the night in Westminster. Well, once before with Dad I had stopped at the Holbrook hotel on Front Street. We just went into the room and went to bed. So I done the same. I found a room and went in and slept there, didn't register or nothing, got up, had my breakfast, and caught the 8 o'clock boat back home again.

Dad said, "Where did you stop?"

I said, "The same place we stopped."

"Who did you see?"

I said, "I didn't see nobody."

Of course, the fellow there had recognized me, and knowing who I was, he knew Dad would fix it up. But they had a great laugh over that. Afterwards, this fellow told me: "Any time, lad, that you're here alone, just help yourself, but," he said, "I'd rather you hunt me up first."

Well, that's what it was like then.

There used to be an old Greek pedlar, a fine old gentleman in baggy clothes that were always too big. He had a big pack—more than an ordinary man would carry—and he used

to pack that from Vancouver. He always walked. He'd open up this pack, and the women and the girls: "oh, isn't that nice!" And sometimes the people had no money, just a few cents. But if you wanted it, you had it. And the next time he'd come, you'd pay him some. He was a wonderful man. He done a lot of good, really, throughout the country, helping these lonely people. 1914 was about the last time I saw him, and he was very old. He died a few years after that. But he'd been going for twenty or thirty years.

* * *

When we came here, of course, the Telegraph Trail and the Yale Road were the only two roads through. The Telegraph Trail was made in the early Cariboo days, and they run a telegraph line there. Sometimes they had poles, but it was mostly wires on trees. It was only a trail, and in the early days was the only communication you had. If you went to go over it with a horse and buggy, you'd have to go through mud holes, and water would come up into the buggy, and you were lucky if you got through. After they'd abandoned it, it was a great source of revenue for farmers, because if you wanted some wire all you had to do was go and nip off a piece. And I guess in the bush there's places with some of it yet. It was heavy, galvanized wire, fastened to trees and poles and everything.

We never seen no pack trains. The only thing we ever saw was in the high water, when they used to drive the cattle down from Sumas, down the old Yale Road. That was cattle drives and all that. Everybody used the Yale Road. In the summertime you could take a wagon over it. But there was no gravel, and in wintertime it was just mud, and wherever there was water holes they stayed full of water, and you drove through them.

I remember one incident. There was a big family had come in away back south of here, and their mother had come out from Scotland, and they were going to meet her. There was a sort of stage or something run up the Yale Road to what they call the Berry Road now. And it was away back in there six miles that they lived, and the poor old lady was worrying how she was going to get in.

Well, one of the fellows that was there, he said, "Oh, Jim will be there with a jumper, and you'll have a ride on that."

The poor lady went up in the air. She said, "A jumper! I never was on a horse in my life."

This jumper was just a crude sleigh, you know, just a couple of crooked sticks with boards nailed across it. I've made them—I was going to say, by the dozen—but lots of them. Well, you'd go through the bush and you'd find mostly in a gully or on a hillside two trees that come out with the curve right in them. You'd cut right into the ground, and you had that curve. That was to run over anything, you see. It was just like a sleigh. And then you used to lay your stuff (poles) across that to make the drawbar and sometimes you'd build up a little stand on it, and make a seat there for two, and a rail across for a handle, because you had to have something to hold on to or you'd get dumped out. The horse would drag it right along; and in the snow they went fine, and in the mud they were not too bad. Of course they were no good on gravel—well, there *was* no gravel. And that's how they got around. Otherwise people had wagons; and outside of the wagon, the odd buggy and two-wheeled carts. They called them butcher carts. They were more like a dump cart, only smaller. Dad had one; that was later.

Going to Town

Sometimes somebody would have a democrat. I remember the Browns down the road, they got a democrat. You know what that is? It's a four wheel heavy buggy, open. Some of them put a top on them after they got them, like—you've heard the song—"the surrey with the fringe on top". Sometimes they had just a shaft for one horse, and sometimes they had a tongue.

I remember one time, after us lads had got away a bit working, we'd come home for the winter, and we didn't like to impose on the old folks, because, you know, times was hard

enough anyway. We'd saved up a little money, because we never used to drink or smoke—Dad didn't, so we didn't. There were four of us; and we'd borrowed this democrat from Mr. Brown and gone into Westminster to Charlie Welsh's store. We'd loaded up a barrel of flour—that's four 50 pound bags—and a hundred of sugar, and a barrel of syrup and we were coming along where Langley Prairie is now. There was nothin' there but snake fences each side, and a mud blue clay road with ruts all through it. All of a sudden down we went. A wheel burned off. Everybody used this rig, but nobody used to grease it. Of course, we was the unlucky ones; we hadn't greased it, either, and the wheel had seized up and burned and rolled off. Of course, we went to this fence, and we selected a nice flat rail, 12 foot long, raised up the axle and put the wheel on. Three of us had to walk, and the youngest, the smallest, he drove, and we goes up to Murrayville. A man named Anderson had come out from the east and was running the blacksmith shop there then, him and his son. They were fine people. Well, we pulled up there to see what he could do about it. Could he fix it? You see, we'd borrowed it.

"Oh, yes, boys, I'll put another axle on for you," he said. "Just pull over there, and I'll back my wagon down." He had a little wagon. He says: "Load it up, and take it home. Come back in about a week and I'll have it fixed."

He had to send in to Cunningham Hardware in Westminster to get this axle. Then he had to take all that apart, weld this axle on, put it all togther again, grease her up. And I remember going down there, wondering what he'd charge us. We had no idea.

So we said, "Mr. Anderson, how much do we owe you for that? We've got the money, and we want to pay you for it."

Well, boys, I'm sorry. There was a lot of work to that. I had to send into town to get it." He had to buy it, you see, and get it sent out. He says, "I'm sorry, but I'll have to charge you $5."

Just imagine that today. We paid him the $5. We were tickled pink. It wasn't enough really, for all that work. But that's what people were like.

* * *

The Westminster market was a wonderful place. There was a brick building—stone or brick, I forget—and it would hold considerable animals—we'll say 40 stalls; and then there was the yard. The market building was off on the other side. And you took your stuff there, and you paid 25¢ and went in there, and people would come and buy it. You'd get a nice veal calf, and you'd dress it and take it down there. You'd get $20 for it.

That was the time everybody had a few hens. We would feed them and we would look after them good. And sometimes they'd lay. But nobody knew anything about making chickens lay in them days, you know, or what to feed them. You'd get a few eggs, take them to Westminster and around Christmas time eggs would go up to a dollar a dozen, you know. Us boys, we thought that was fine.

I remember one time leaving home about 4 o'clock in the morning with six eight-week-old pigs, and a crate of heavy birds—chicken—for Westminster market. And dad said: "Now lad, you're to ask $3 for those pigs apiece. And the chickens, I know nothing about them, they're your mother's, you can do what you like with them.

But I didn't get into the market. I pulled up there with this here market cart and the old mare, unhooked her and put her in. And when I came out here was a Chinaman.

"You chickey?"

"Yes, my chickens."

"How much you want?"

"Oh, I don't know. How much you give?"

Well, he looked at the chickens and he gave me 18¢ a pound for them. That was good. I knew it was good, so I sold them.

"The pig? How much you want a pig?"

"Oh, I said, "I want three and a half for the pig."

"Three dollar and a half?" He looked at them, and finally he said, "I take them."

By George! But the old man, when I got home and told him I'd sold them for three and a half, he was sore. He said I hadn't done what he told me to.

Fairs and Picnics

I remember going to the Second Exhibition in Langley. Of course we were just kids, barefooted. They held it at Murrayville, right across from where the store is at the corner. It was a country fair, with horse bucking and rodeo stuff; and they had races and a stock show, and horses pulling a big stoneboat—or a jumper, as they called it—loaded with rocks. There was a prize. I remember the Johnstons from away down Johnston Road, in Surrey. They had a great big team—such pretty things—and they hooked on first; and of course they could walk right away. Then Sam Cawker up here had a spirited little black team. They hooked on to it, and you could see the poor little legs bending. But they pulled it. Then there was an old Swede had one big horse. He figured he'd pull it, too, but he would zig-zag it. And he moved it.

Then this lad that used to get orders when he was going to town and leave them at the end of the road, he used to play the bagpipes. And he was playing away at this fair, and along down Murrayville Hill comes poor old Cottle. He had a team of oxen, and his family were all loaded in this wagon. He was a little man; he wasn't five feet. He was wearing Wellington boots, and walking along with the oxen. Well, this lad came on with his bagpipes. And you know how oxen—or cows—can run when they're scared; these oxen struck off down the road, with the kids and women in the wagon screaming and hollering.

Well, us boys could run like deer then; and I remember Henry Brown and I—we were schoolmates, and they had oxen, so he knew all about them—he went down one side and I down the other, and we caught them. We were hammering them on the nose, and got them stopped. Of course we were quite the heroes that day. I remember old Riddell—he and Davidson had the first store there at Murrayville—I remember him giving us each a good big bag of candies for stopping these oxen. And when the lemonade came around we got that free.

They used to have these annual summer picnics; just an ordinary community picnic, something you don't have today. There was always somebody who was a leader. So if somebody suggested it, they'd set a time when it was convenient for all, and away they'd go. They were all one family really.

The 24th of May we used to have a holiday. But that was mostly for going fishing and stuff like that. The first of July they used to have a good picnic. Sometimes during the summer there would be two. One favourite spot was over in the old Jardine place, where the Hudson Bay farm was. Great big trees had grown up, Scotch firs, and all clear underneath. Farmers used to climb these trees and make two or three of the wonderfullest swings; and the church girls would make tubfulls of lemonade. They'd give you all you wanted. And of course, that went good with kids. They were happy days.

And then—this was years after—they used to get three or four wagons and hay racks, put hay on them, leave early in the morning and drive away to Blackie's Spit near Whiterock. There was a trail right through. Drive down there for a great day at the beach, come back at night tireder than a dog, and have to go in and do your chores.

Wintertime

I was telling somebody about the Fraser River freezing over in the winter, and they didn't believe it. This northeast wind would be coming down, and oh, it *was* cold. It used to run from three days to three weeks. If it passed the three days you knew you had nine days of it. I remember we'd gone down on the boat, the old *Bon Accord*, to Westminster, and Dad had bought this team and sleigh. Then it froze up, and the river was froze over solid. They were teaming hay on the river from Ladner up. Well, Dad had to get this team home, and he was kinda scared. It was rough ice, it wasn't smooth, so you didn't have to have those horses shod. Well, Dad gets down there, and a fisherman said he'd hire him his boat for a dollar—flat bottom boat, you see. So that was tied on behind the sleigh, and Mother and the three of us children were all in this boat. Dad was driving the team, and the old fisherman came

along too. He just walked, but he had an axe. You see, it was Dad's idea that if the team went through the ice, all he'd do was chop the rope, and the boat would stay there, and we wouldn't be drowned. Of course nothing happened. I guess the ice was 18 inches to two feet thick. Several times since I've seen it freeze over solid.

The snow used to drift, and you couldn't get out. The last really bad snow we had here was in 1913, when it was up to your waist, four or five feet of it. Before the farmers could get it off these old barns the rain made it so heavy they caved in. But we always had good sleighing. Every framer had a sleigh in them days, and they were sleighing all winter. That's a fact. When the snow came in November it stayed until . . . well, I've seen us go with the sleigh in the first week of April, and never get back with it, it thawed that quick. You'd go off somewhere with the sleigh and you'd have to drag it home on the mud. But all along December, January and February we had good sleighing; mostly through March, just like in the Cariboo. Of course, then it was all timber. Everything's cut now, there's no bush in effect, and the wind gets in.

And when you talk about the cold, you know, a split cedar house isn't the warmest place to sleep. We had this big old stove, and it was up off the floor about eight to ten inches, you see. And we always had a lot of cats, and they all lay under there: it was warm. Dad would say, or Mother would say, "Well, boys, it's time to climb that wooden hill." That meant to go upstairs, you see. Well, it was pretty cold, because there was none of these fancy mattresses them days. You just had a straw mattress, renewed every year, and lots of blankets. Of course there'd be a bunch of us boys sleeping together. The girls had a bedroom downstairs. But before you'd start to climb that wooden hill, you'd dive for the stove, and a cat would come out by the tail or by the leg—a big cat. Then off to bed with the cat. And Dad had made a place so that if the cats wanted to go out, they could, and if they wanted to come in, they'd come back in. But they used to sleep with us, and it would keep us warm. They liked it, too, in that cold weather.

Dad was a very resourceful man. On the end wall that was boarded with cedar, at very appropriate heights there were knot holes. And these was very convenient at times, you see, because if you had to get down and go outside in that cold weather, you'd freeze before you could get back again. So I often look back over it and imagine how he'd laugh to himself when he was doing it. I know he did. But he'd never say nothing.

That's what it was like at our place, anyway, and a lot of the rest was the same, because we used to go from one place to the other. "Can I go home with so and so tonight?"

We'd go down to McInnes's, Dan and I, we were the same age, and we'd stop over the night and back to school the next day. It was something to break the monotony.

* * *

We used to have a wonderful time at Christmas. Everybody did. They were mostly good-sized families, and they all believed in Santa Claus. Like me, a boy of 14 years old, and I still believed in Santa Claus! You can hardly believe it, can you? And Dad and Mother and all of them used to go all out to give the kids a good time. There would be a Christmas tree, and we'd have our stockings hanging all around, and the cake would be put there for Santa Claus to eat. That was just a custom. Mother would say, "Well, he'll be hungry after coming all that way with his pack." Dad and Mum would have a bite of something to eat before they went to bed after doing all this, and of course there was a piece of cake left on the table there for Santa Claus, and it would be gone in the morning, and the crumbs would be scattered along where he'd gone to the door. He'd had it all right! There were all these things to make it look real. And it was. That's all we lived for: Christmas.

I remember one Christmas in particular. We'd done something, or left something undone, and Santa Claus wasn't coming. Of course, they were only fooling us, but we didn't know it. So we gets up in the morning, four o'clock we'd start.

"Mama, can I get up?"

"Wait a little while". Then she'd say, "All right, you can get up."

And we went down, and the piece of cake was gone; and he hadn't left anything. Our stockings just had shavings in them. Well, I declare! He was getting a calling down, I tell

you! And Dad and Mum were sleeping in the room right off, you see, and they could hear all this. We were calling him down: how mean he was, and we wouldn't be good, we wouldn't be good any more: we'd tried. And we were carrying on like that. You know what kids would be like. There was six or seven of us, I think, by that time.

The old mare, she heard us hollering. The stable wasn't far away, and I used to have to feed the horses.

Mum says, "Bert, you better go and give the horses hay, anyway, will you?"

I said, "All right".

I goes out, and I climbs up on this ladder. There was a ladder up, and a loft overhead, and the hay was there that I used to throw to the horses. Well, the horses didn't get nothing, because hanging from the ceiling was the biggest Christmas tree you ever saw, and it was absolutely loaded. Well, of course, down I fell and ran into the house. My eyes were sticking out, you know, like saucers, and I couldn't talk plain or tell them what it was. So they were all trying to get dressed then to get out.

I remember that year I got a mouth organ and an axe. My brother got an axe and a little gun. And other little things—candies, and things, all tied up for my sisters and other brothers, all according to their age. Wonderful presents! And that had to all be packed on his back. They'd go down to Westminster and come up on the late ferry and pack it up through the bush there five miles. Then it was hid, and we didn't know nothing about it. And the tree; he'd go out and he'd cut this tree down, and take the top off it, and do that all at night after we'd gone to bed. And the others use to do the same. We used to go comparing what we'd got. Some of the richer kids had nicer shoes or something like that. But we were always satisfied. It was a wonderful time. And you know it just knocked the wind out of our sails when we found out there isn't a Santa Claus. Gee whiz, that's too bad! Afterwards I often wished there *was* a Santa Claus.

Mission Boy

Brief as they are, Cornelius Kelleher's childhood memories are rather special. They not only reach back for more than a century—he was born in 1872—but are largely concerned with life at the Oblate mission on the Fraser, where the city of Mission is today. Moreover, Cornie had ancestral roots in two cultures. His mother was a Nooksack Indian from south of the border, and his father, Mortimer Kelleher, was an Irishman whose story, as Cornie tells it, has an adventurous ring typical of those days.

My dad left Ireland when he was a young fellow. His dad wanted him to marry a rich, moneyed woman. He wouldn't listen to that, so he ran away to sea. He came to San Francisco, and jumped ship. He was going to go to the goldfields. But that kind of petered out. There was a big Indian uprising over in Yakima, so he enlisted into the American army to fight the Indians. After they got through with them fellows, he drifted over this way to the gold fields in the Cariboo. He worked there for quite a while, but things were petering out, so he came back down and took a ranch over here in Sumas Prairie. But the water kept coming up every year, so he quit that, and came over to the mission side of the river and took up a ranch where Mission City is now. That was before I was born.

He growed his own vegetables and potatoes, caught fish in the river and meat in the woods. He used to work for the mission to get a few dollars, clearing land, putting in crops and stuff like that. A lot of them that had ranches around there had gone to the Cariboo and got broken. They they got work at the mission, and it was these fellows that got the grist mill and sawmill going.

In its earliest days the mission was no more than a small collection of log cabins on a slope just above the river, and pretty much where the highway east of Mission City runs today. Mortimer Kelleher's farm was a mile or two to the west, down on the flats, and that's where Cornie was born and spent his earliest years. But his father died when he was seven, and from then on "Mort's boy" lived mainly at the mission with the Indian children and others of mixed parentage. He had a sister, younger than he was, but she died not long after she started school at the convent of the Sisters of St. Anne.

So Cornie was brought up largely by the priests and lay brothers, and one gets the impression that he was a lively and intelligent lad to whom they eventually entrusted jobs of some responsibility. As in all the Indian residential schools of those days—and it was the same in many settlers' families—school work tended to take second place to daily chores and the sheer battle for survival. After all, the boys were being trained to become farm workers, carpenters, and such, and the girls to have a knowledge of cooking, sewing, and general housekeeping.

With all this, Cornie was able to give us an unusual glimpse of the early days of St. Mary's Mission, and even of its founder, the highly respected Father Fouquet, who had come to the country from France in December of 1859 as a young priest of 28. He had already made his mark as a theologian, but had eagerly traded his chair of theology for a log cabin in the wilderness. Cornie came to know him when, after service in various parts of British Columbia, he had retired to the mission he had founded.

Father Fouquet

He was a very gentle sort of old man, you know, very soft spoken. I remember him very well, because I used to have lots of conversation with the old gentleman. The last time I had one I was up at the mission there, and we sat down for hours, I guess, talking about how he came up. They came into Oregon first—the O.M.I.—and from Oregon they drifted over here to Vancouver Island. From Vancouver Island he was delegated to come up the Fraser River to find a suitable place for the start of a mission. He said they came in in 1862.

"I took 12 Indians from down in New Westminster," he said, "and we come up in a big Chinook canoe, and came to this place here. When I come around the bend down there I seen this little hill, a nice place, and flat land across the river. I said, 'That's the place I'm going to have.' So we landed at the crick,"—Mission crick they call it now—"And we had to cook our dinner—dry salmon, and some potatoes that we had. Then I cultus cooley around the back, you see." What he meant, in Chinook, was that we was going to take a look around. He told the Indians: "Nika ticky cultus cooley around. Nanitch, byan'by mamook house yakwa." [I want to stroll around and look and soon build a house there.]

So they had their lunch and had a look around. "Then we got in the canoe," he says, "and we went up the river way up to Fort Yale. But I see no place like this, so I went back down to New Westminster and over to Victoria to the headquarters. Bishop d'Herbomez was head bishop there then."

"Well," he says, "we made arrangements to come up and start. And I got a bunch of Indians with me, and Brother Ryan, and an old brother, Brother Varnier. We come up and started building log houses where we could live, and the Indians had log houses, too. But we never paid the Indians anything. They lived on us, and they were glad to help us."

He got the Indians to whipsaw the lumber and hew the logs for their log cabins. There were a lot of Indians them days—not like now. When we used to get them "first processions" as they called it, there would be thousands of Indians come from all over—from way down Sechelt and all up the river as far as Yale. They'd come down in their canoes, and the place would be just covered with tents all along the bank of the river. There was thousands of them. And they used to cut their hair straight across, and paint their faces red. The mission was for the Indians, you see, and they always had Indians around them, a lot of them with their families. They built themselves cabins all along the bank of the river. And they helped the O.M.I. priests wonderfully, I thought. I have a book that somebody wrote, but she never said a darn word about Indians helping the priests.

The first buildings were down towards the crick, as they called it. They were not very elaborate. When I first went there, in '79, our schoolroom was a little log house. But they were just cutting enough lumber to build what we used to call the priests' house, which was a big long building, two storeys, where the clergymen had their own rooms. Their chapel was in the east end of it.

The Sawmill

Jim Tretheway was the man that planned the sawmill. He was a great big man with a beard. The old man and his son, Joe, came over the Rockies long before the CPR, and stopped at Joshua Wells' place (at Hatzic). Then they worked for the mission for quite a long time, putting in the sawmill and grist mill, with the help of the Indians and that old Brother Varnier, who was a jack-of-all-trades. It was an up and down saw, run by water power. Father Fouquet must have got it imported from France.

There was this crick, Mission crick, and they built a regular dam away up in the bush to hold the water. The mission, of course, had these Indians whipsawing lumber for to make this flume and this penstock to turn the water wheel down below. The flume was all of 18 inches wide, all ripped out by hand, and the same for the penstock that went to catch the water that drove the turbine. Them timbers that they put in under that grist mill and sawmill

were 12 × 12's; and no spikes in them days, you know, or drift bolts either. All them tie beams and things was bored with an auger, and a peg drove in there to hold them together. I remember that, because I've seen them.

When they first started to run the sawmill they got oxen from Oregon, where they had their first mission. They hauled the logs; and they used to cut a lot of lumber. All the lumber that they built the new houses with they cut for themselves right in that mill. The grist mill was run by water power, too. The new settlers from Chilliwack, up the river, used to bring their wheat down there to get it ground; and they'd take so much off of it for grinding the wheat—so much bran and so much shorts and so much middlings.

School Days

There was a church between the priests' house and the convent. The convent was west of the church. It was where the Sisters of St. Anne came to teach the Indian girls. Back of the church was a row of buildings where the Indians used to live that was working for the mission.

After they shifted us from our log houses, we had double two storey buildings. The bottom storey was a classroom and the upper was a dormitory. And, boy was it cold! The winds would blow through them rough boards—no planing mills them days. And we didn't have only a basin or two to wash in, so in the mornings us boys decided we'd take our soap and towel and go down to the crick to wash. Even when it got cold, we'd go down there. Then we got daring one another to get into the water. Boy, we sure did, and splash around, too; and there was ice on the water. Then we had to get back up there and go into the chapel, no fire in it at all—and stay there for a quarter of an hour or half an hour. Boy, it was cold. After you'd got into the water and got warmed up it didn't matter very much; but if you didn't go down into the crick and jump in the water, you felt the cold more.

We had another house, below the priests' house. We went down there to eat; they had made a cookhouse of it, and a dining room; and this Brother Varnier built a great big chimney on the end of it, of rock. He was quite a man; he could turn his hand to most anything. He got the rock and mixed up clay and lime and straw, and all kinds of things, and built a big fireplace, with an iron bar across it; I don't know where they got it.

It was just an open fireplace, with big logs—anything you could get ahold of. We didn't have a stove for years. They used to haul logs in with the ox teams, and in the wintertime we'd saw them with crosscut saws, and split them up. We had a big woodshed up there. They had brought with them great big brass kettles, monstrous big things. They hooked them onto this iron bar and hung them over the fire. They used to cook the soup and boil the beef and potatoes and vegetables in them; or they'd roast the salmon by the fire. There was a brother that made the bread for us. But they didn't have much flour them days until they got the grist mill going. The nuns had their own cookhouse and bakery.

* * *

They had to support themselves and grow their own wheat and potatoes and everything, But, them days, most families didn't have milk. At the O.M.I. mission we never had milk for years and years, though we had cattle there; but we never milked them. We let them run with the calves. It was mostly for beef. They killed the beef in the fall of the year and salted it.

The mission used to have cattle over on the south side of the river, but the young fellows over there who were looking after them weren't very good. They didn't cut enough hay, and in the spring of the year they were out of hay. So they turned the oxen and cattle loose, and they went down through the swamp—the swamp grass was growing fast—and they ate some of this wild parsnip, and that was the finish of them. It didn't seem to hurt them when the stuff was up quite high, because they'd nip the blossom, But if they got into it when it was coming up, they just bloated right up and died.

We used to like to go over to that side of the river to cut hay for the oxen that was hauling wood for the houses, putting in crops, and so on. We used to take our grub and our blankets and camp out for weeks, as long as the weather was good. Everything was done by "armstrong mower", you know. And they built a barn right on the edge of the river on what we used to call the Barn Prairie, so we could load hay onto a big scow and haul it over to the mission side. When the weather got too hot, we used to go down to the river, jump in and swim around, then go back cutting hay again. We had lots of work, but we had lots of fun all the same.

* * *

There was an orchard from where the mission buildings were, down to the river—grafts that Father Fouquet said he got from Oregon, and some from France—plum trees and all kinds of apple trees and pear trees and all that. They used to grow some great apples. We never see anything like them nowadays.

Our school was right up against the orchard. Some of the trees were right along the windows—apple trees and peach trees. So before us boys would go to sleep, when the old priest had gone back to his building, some of us would jump out of bed, run down to the orchard to pick up some apples, and we'd be chewing them in bed. One night one of the boys was down towards the river and there happened to be a bear up the tree, having some apples too. The boy was picking up apples at the foot, and of course the bear heard him and started to come down. The boy thought it was one of the other boys, so he climbed up and was going to get hold of him and pull him down. When he got hold of the bear—the hair, he let out a yell. I don't know which was more scared, the bear or him. He ran right up into his bed and covered his head with his blankets.

"I seen a bear. I seen a bear. I seen a bear," he says.

"Where's the apples?"

"Oh, the devil with the apples!"

We didn't have any apples to chew that night.

We used to have lots of fun going to bed. Of course, we had to go as soon as the sun went down, pretty near, when we were still full of hell. An old fellow by the name of John Strong used to march up and down the middle of the dormitory to keep us quiet. So we took into our heads to pick up our pillows, and when he'd be going by we'd hit him in the back of the head, then jump into our beds and cover up. He would holler, but he couldn't catch anybody. Well, I guess we made so much noise that Father Martin came up with a switch. He opened the dormitory door, and there was a boy with his shirt-tail, and he let a whack at him, and the boy let a yell out of him and ran for his bed. I remember the old father going around. He'd peer into somebody's face, but that fellow was sleeping, he had his eyes closed. And years afterwards, when I was married and living on this side (on Matsqui Prairie), Father Martin came over, and he laughed until the tears ran down his face, about the pranks we used to play; the way that boy let a yell out of himself, and how quick everybody got into their own beds and the blankets on them and their eyes closed. Oh, boy, we used to have lots of fun.

* * *

My first school teacher was a German. That was Captain Henry. He was supposed to have been a captain on a sailing boat. He'd got off to go to the gold fields, and didn't make it. So he'd come back down to the O.M.I.'s and taught school. And when you couldn't go up to the blackboard, he'd hit you on the fingers with a rod, and it wasn't soft in them days. You had to be just on the spot. But there were all kinds of teachers, mostly French teachers trying to teach us English. We had a whole bunch of them. When I came there in '79 the priest was a Belgian fellow by the name of Father Carion.

One nice summer evening when I was at school we seen smoke coming out from Mount Baker. Brother Ryan—he was a great friend of mine—was walking up and down, in our yard, and we says to him, "Look at the smoke way over on Mount Baker."

"Yes," he says, "I know. When I first came here a few years ago I could read my book right here in this yard from the light of that fire."

Quite often we'd see a great big cloud of smoke over there. When there would be no wind it used to go way up in the air, and sometimes it would go away altogether. Then it would be there again.

The Coming Of The CPR

Probably the first sign that a transcontinental railway was on its way was an increase in the river traffic, more especially, a brand new steamboat, the William Irving, *which made its maiden voyage to Yale in May 1880, just when Andrew Onderdonk was starting to construct the Yale to Kamloops section of the railway.*

It was a great big boat with a great big eagle on top of the pilot house. When the CPR was building, she used to come up in the freshet—the high water—and get in as close as they could to the roadbed, and dump all their rails right on the bank.

The next big boat was the *Elizabeth Irving*, and she had electric light on her. She was going to run night and day. So the first trip up from Westminster, we knew about it and were waiting. She came along at night, and when she rounded the point down there she turned on the lights, and you could see everything in front of her away up to the mission. That was the first electric light I ever seen in my life—shining right up from the bend of the river, a search light.

* * *

We had to get out there with the band, and I was ringing this old bell there at the church. A whole bunch of big shots was on that boat going up for the first run, and of course when she came ashore Father Carion had to go aboard with the rest of the dignitaries. But she only made three runs, and she got burned up just below Hope somewhere. But it sure was great to see that electric light.

The survey party came in '82, about September. They came from the east towards the coast, and the first thing I seen was the engineers that run the line through. Tents was pitched just above the old sawmill in the spot where they used to clean out the sawdust. So we had to go down and see who was there. That's when I seen the first transit.

We was questioning this fellow what that was for.

"Well," he says, "I keep this behind these men that's cutting the line to keep them straight."

Then he told us boys that there was going to be a railroad come through there. Well, we didn't know what a railroad was. We'd seen pictures of locomotives and things like that, but we'd never seen an actual steam engine or anything. We didn't have any steam in our life up to then, except, of course, the steam boats. He was quite a nice fellow. He was telling us all about it.

Well, in the fall of the year—'82 it was—right after they'd gone through, the slashing crew came and slashed all the trees down and burned them up. And the grading crew come the next summer, grading the roadbed. They had mules, oxen and horses, slush scrapers and everything.

Before the mules come, they were blowing stumps, and we thought that was great. They used black powder, you see, and it made a great big smoke after they'd set it off. We used to see the roots go way up in the air, and big black clouds. Then the bridge gang come along and put the bridge in there at Mission crick. Of course the steam boat brought up the sawed lumber—timbers for the bridge—and the mission oxen hauled it up to where they could reach it.

They tore down our flume; that's what we didn't like—well, the mill was out of action before that—and they cut some of our apple trees down; that's what we didn't like either. Then not far from the bridge they built a big tank where the engines used to get their water. That's the first time we had seen a pipe—to pipe the water from the crick into this tank. We boys were pretty curious, you know.

The next fall they began to lay the steel rails. They were laying them rails night and day, from east to west. So one morning here was a little steam engine in front of our place, and a gang of men carrying ties and rails ahead of it. We all went through the schoolroom windows and doors and down onto the track. Old Father Petevin was our teacher and he was hollering at us to come back, but we didn't pay no attention to him. He couldn't have stopped us anyway. So we got onto the tie cars, and asked the conductor, "Give us a ride. Give us a ride. Give us a ride." "All right," he said. So he signalled to the engineer, and they drove us back somewhere. That was our first ride on a railroad track. Pretty near all the whole gang of us boys was on it. We thought that was great.

When the locomotive was watering up, we'd hang onto the box cars and ride down as far as the station. Kids, of course, have got to have a ride, no matter whether you cut your legs off.

I remember the little old locomotive No. 2. It used to get off the track quite often. I seen fellows jacking her up and putting her on the rail again—a small little locomotive, you know, lighter than the big one. The roadbed wasn't very solid. But they had that little one hauling the ties and the rails ahead.

I remember when Bishops Lootens and I would go away up to Hatzic Slough fishing. He was a great fisherman, this old bishop, and he'd take me along—I don't know why, because I didn't like to be with him, I liked to be out playing with the boys. But he'd always get me to go along with him. The train used to come down in the evening; we knew that. So one time he says, "We'll have a ride on the train when we go home." I thought that was pretty good, too. So we got on the railroad track, and he kneeled down and put his ear on the rail. "She's not coming yet," he says, "I can hear her when she's coming." So once in a while he'd kneel down and listen, and sure enough she come along. So he flagged her down, and she stopped. We got in this box car and rode down as far as the mission. That was my first ride in a car—a box car, at that. They had seats on both sides for passengers on local runs, you know, before they had the real passenger cars.

Well, the CPR bought all that sidehill down where the co-op cannery is now, and the mission got enough money to build new houses on the top of the hill. They moved up there in '87, I think.

LITTLE PETE

Peter Lagacé's ancestors came from the shores of the St. Lawrence. His father, Amable Lagacé, grew up on a farm at Bic near Rimouski, and took up the trade of plasterer. We next hear of him on his way out west, with his wife Philomena and three little children, crossing the plains in a covered wagon. That was during the building of the CPR.

I don't know if he was working for the CPR on the way from Winnipeg or not, but when they got to Calgary he got a contract for cutting the right of way from Lake Louise to Craigellachie. He got some horses, and he had three old timers, old Billy Martin, and Regis and Damarse [?] Hudon, and they went ahead with Mother and the little children and the horses before anything was cut. Mother kept the books and fed the surveyors who were always a few miles ahead of the crew. Regis and Damarse [?] was the cooks, and this old Billy Martin was the wrangler.

They had a lot of experiences. In some places they had to swing the wagons around with pulleys and take the horses one at a time. And at all the bad places, my mother and the kids would walk, you know.

They had an old lady with them, an old French lady that was coming along to kind of look after the children; and this old lady could drive the horses and everything. But my mother was scared, because Dad was leaving her all alone all the time. She was pretty timid, you know. And these Indians come running—about 30 or 40, quite a band of them. And they was all on horseback and painted up, and just breech-cloths on; and they circled all around the wagon. They would come up to this little window, take a look in and grin.

They were having a big time watching the palefaces inside. But Mother was scared to death. She had the kids in the corner, and she says to this old lady, "My goodness, you got to try to get out, and get the men. These wild men are going to kill us all."

The old lady says, "I'm not scared of them."

She opened up this window, and she had a parasol. That's all they had, they had no weapons. And there was this great buck sitting right in the window, so she poked him right the stomach; and he hollered and fell right off his horse. All the rest of them laughed, and then they beat it. They were harmless you know.

Amable Lagacé is in the famous picture of driving the last spike at Craigellachie. From there they went into the Nilcola country, and Amable worked for one of the Guichon brothers. Then he went down near Ladner to work for the other brother as a butter maker; but the delta didn't suit them. So through the influence of the priests at St. Mary's Mission, Amable pre-empted on the north end of Hatzic Prairie, at the edge of the forest. And a little colony grew up around them of French and Italian Catholics. But at first there was no place for the family to stay, so they were put up at the misssion, and that's where Pete was born.

About fifteen years ago I was in California, and I come up here to get my birth certificate. They didn't register in those days like now. I went up to the Indian mission, and they had started having them young fellows there—no more of them old time missionaries. They had a big vault there, and he couldn't find my birth certilficate at all, you know, in all them books.

I says, "My goodness, it must be here." And I looked and looked. "Well," I says, "what's this compartment here?"

"Oh," he says, "that's only Indians."

"Well", I says, "my goodness, let's look."

I dug down and here in the first book I pulled out was my name: "born in 1893, in Mission."

And he says, "My, my, my, I don't know how that ever happened."

They were a big family. There were eleven children in all. Five were born before they got to Hatzic. The father and mother were true habitants, with all the skills required of pioneers, and then some.

The family stayed at the mission until Dad got a little land cleared up here. And you know how it would be, them days, trees six foot through, chop them and bury up the stump and everything else. He'd do it all by hand. They had them great big saws. And if he was alone, he'd stick a vine maple pole in the ground on the other side of the tree, and take a string, and tie the other end of the saw to that, you see. And that held the saw up and would pull it back and hold it straight. Then when he'd sawed so much, he'd move his pole back a little bit. It didn't take long, and down they'd come. I guess there's some of them does that yet—some of them old hand-loggers, you know.

He'd do it all by hand, cut it all down. I remember him pulling them big stumps and big logs, and they wouldn't burn, the cedar would be so wet. Then he'd dig a great big hole by hand and bury them. Can you imagine that—great big stumps. That work didn't mean nothing.

He built the house with logs and split cedar for everything else. Get them great big cedars, saw them and split them. He'd do it all by hand. He didn't have them boughten wedges, neither. They'd make the wedges out of crab apple or other hard wood, and season them in the fire—keep putting them in, burning them off and scraping them. Then they'd put some haywire around them to kind of stop them from splitting. And that's what they'd use. Then they'd make a big maul and get them rings put around it—like what they used to drive posts. That's how Dad used to split logs, with homemade wedges and that big maul.

* * *

These fellows, Damarse [?] and Regis Hudon, and old Billy Martin, they had worked for the old man, and I guess they come in the same time as he did. But I think it was two years before he brought the family out. We had a little log house. I remember people began to come in then and homestead. There was French and a little bunch of Italians. And they used to come to our place, and then the old man would locate them—glad to get settlers in. If the settler had a wife and kids—sometimes they would have a baby—my mother would say, "Well, you can't leave that woman up there in the wilds." So we'd pick them up and bring them down to the house for the winter; if they had no milk, lend them a cow.

We used to have the post office and a kind of stopping place. Everybody would come down to get the mail. And most of the bachelors, even the camp fellows, they'd come down on a Saturday night. There was always lots of room. They'd sleep in the barn, you know. It was nice and warm. We had cattle and good big barns, all made out of logs and split cedar. On a weekend it was like a great big picnic. You'd have two or three tables to feed. It was nothing to have 20 or 30 at a feeding. And you always had something to feed them, although you didn't have no money.

My mother used to cook everything in them great big iron pots. In the morning for breakfast, pancakes and eggs and steaks and pork chops and potatoes and beans. All the cream you wanted, and homemade butter. You didn't feed like you do now. Everybody was hungry and had good appetites, seems to me.

The same thing in the middle of the day, and supper the same. We'd have maybe chops, or roast beef or pork, and lots of potatoes and vegetables. There wasn't nothing fancy.

* * *

We'd live off the land. You had to. Every year the old man would clear a new little piece for the garden—grub it out. There was no weeds, and the new land didn't need nothing. My goodness, everything grew: onions and carrots and potatoes and turnips. We grew everything.

My dad planted fruit tre[illegible]ight away, everybody did that first thing. There was a lot of these wild crab apple trees here. They were acclimatized and everything. He'd pick out the

nice straight ones and bring them home and plant them, cut the limbs off in spring, and get some (fruit tree) shoots and graft them. They didn't do graft budding, them days. They'd split the trees and put that piece in there, then put some tar on it. It wasn't pine tar. We'd get some pitch off the trees and melt that, and put that around them. And that's how they started the orchards. We had peaches and pears and plums; and there never was no such thing as any disease.

You could pick wild fruit: huckleberries and salmonberries. They never canned, them days; everything was made into jam. Lard and everything used to come in them wooden buckets. You didn't have these cans. And Mother used to fill all them big buckets full of jam, made with raspberries. And the Indians used to bring all the fish we wanted. They'd come up with great big salmon, ten cents apiece. Then there was lots of grouse. We used to live high in them days. We lived better than we do now.

Old Billygut

A school was started up there on the hill. A fellow had given an acre there. I started school when I was four years old. I had long, blonde hair and they never cut my hair until I was four, they used to keep it rolled up. The big Marquette girls used to pack me to school. They'd pick me up at the bridge and pack me on their backs, with my legs each side, and pack me home again at night. I wasn't very big.

My first teacher was Annie Haney, from Haney. And we liked all the teachers them days, except one. We used to call him Old Billygut. He was a great big fat fellow, and he'd get mad. He used to drink quite a bit, the old devil, and sometimes he'd get drunk.

Of course, we didn't know it. He'd say, "Baldwin says, 'stunning, crushing blows!'" And he'd hit us with a stick on the hand—you know, hold your hand out. And sometimes he'd hit us around the legs, pretty hard, too. Some of the bigger kids would say, "You've got no right to hit him hard like that."

"No," he says. He'd read the school ordinance: "Baldwin says 'stunning, crushing blows.'" And he'd hammer his desk. Baldwin was supposed to be the head of all the schools in B.C., or something.

He weighed about 250 pounds, and they played a trick on him. They took his chair, unglued it or something, and he went to sit in it and fell right through on the floor. Boy! He got up. His face was so red he was pretty near apoplexy, or whatever you call it. And then he hollered, "Baldwin!" But nobody would say who it was. He never found out. He had a mind to lick the whole school. The old devil would be half full of liquor most of the time, and finally they fired him.

There was nobody logging around here them days, except Rouleau. He started in cutting them great big fir logs; and he had, I think, 16 bulls with yokes. And he used to haul them logs right down to the creek.

The Loggers

The logging camps were all up at Stave Lake, up here about six or seven miles. They used to throw the logs into the lake, and boom them and float them down. I guess they used to shoot them over the falls. Three outfits used to log in there. And they freighted everything up this road with horses, all their supplies, and hay and oats and grain and everything. In the high water time, Amos and Joshua Wells used to bring it up with a tugboat. There was no dyke then, so they'd come underneath the railroad bridge and land just down here where the bridge is.

They used to haul for all the camps and bring up supplies and take the milk down, and the calves and whatever else, for all the farmers. It was called the milk tug. It used to pick up all the milk. Everybody used to milk cows and ship milk in big barrels. When the water was

only a little high and too low for the tugs, they'd go down in rowboats. Then they'd go clear to Mission. In the wintertime they used to have sleighs. Everybody had sleighs. There used to be snow then.

So that's what made all the traffic here, and that's how we used to get all them lumberjacks. They used to come down to get their mail and to court the girls and the schoolmarm. And most of them would have a bunch of grouse. They all had rifles, them days. Some of them packed six-shooters. They'd come on Saturday night and stay till Sunday. On Sunday we'd have shooting matches and so forth, to pass the time away, and everybody used to put up bottles and targets to see who could shoot the best. All the women would shoot, too, you know.

When they went to town they always used to bring us kids some candy or something, which we never seen in them days, except at Christmas we got a little bit of hard candy and an orange. And when they'd come back they stopped at our place, but they'd be drunk, you know, and we'd rush out and put them to bed, put them in the barn or the bunkhouse. Some of the really old-timers that we knew so well, like Billy Martin, we had a place for them upstairs above the kitchen.

Supplies

They called this Hatzic Prairie. But Hatzic was the station down there, and they were getting mixed up. Well, they had had some bishop, Monseigneur Durieu, and my mother wanted to change the name to Durieu after him. A lot of them didn't want to have it that name, and there was quite a row about it. But she got her way, having the post office. She kept the post office here until they started the rural route. I remember, it used to be $18 a year and cancellation of the stamps. The Rouleaus had a contract to haul the mail. They used to pack it on saddle horses.

The store was at Dewdney, right where the McKamie road hits the river there. John Barker, old man Barker, he used to keep the store, him and two old maid sisters. We used to go down there on saddle horses or sleighs or wagons, whatever way we could get down, and for ten cents we'd get a lunch. They'd give us a great big sack full of cookies and a great big hunk of cheese. Then we'd buy our molasses; we'd bring our jugs—25¢ a jug it used to be—and the old man always used to let the jug run over. He did it purposely, you know. Then he'd jump and we'd all get our fingers in. I'll never forget that. When he'd give you a postcard, he'd put it up, and he'd look, then he'd turn around and he'd say the address, and then he'd say, from so-and-so, and he'd read the whole thing. Everybody got a kick out of it, you know. Then he'd give us some hot tea, when we were getting cold. It wasn't like people now.

When the water was high, the boat used to come up to the store. That was Barker's Landing. But when they couldn't come up the slough, they'd land about half a mile below at Sam Smith's place. We used to call it Smith's Landing. When we got grown up a little bigger, we sometimes used to get on the boats with our saddle horses and go down to New Westminster. We'd ride our horse on and leave the saddle on. Then the Indian deckhands would take the saddle off, and we'd go up and lay around the boat. When we'd get to Westminster, we'd saddle up the horse, get on and ride off. You see, it was a dollar for a horse, and it would have been 50¢ for us if we hadn't rode.

We could buy real good stuff cheaper down in Westminster. But if we'd have got it delivered down to the wharf and packed it on the boat, and then led on our horse, we would have had to pay so much a pound. So instead of that, the deckhands would help us pile it on the horse and fasten it just enough so it would hold on. We'd have such a doggone pile, you know. Then we'd unload it.

I remember coming up one time. I was just a little fellow: I couldn't pack. And boy, I had an awful lot of stuff. The mate says, "You've got to get it all on, because if you don't . . . ." I guess he was teasing me. "If you don't get it all on," he says, "you're going to have to pay so much a pound."

Before we got to Mission we'd have to load it on again, to get off the boat. But they used to get a kick out of it, the captain and all, you know.

Sometimes we'd ride down to New Westminster, around by Stave Falls—the old road. It might take a week to come home, and we'd stop anywheres along the road. We'd call on a family. No matter where you stopped, you was welcome them days.

But real early, the trail I remember most was the old Yale Road. We used to go across on the ferry and go down by Abbotsford. And all along there was great big trees. It was all timber.

We used to get grub once a year by the ton, you know, a ton of flour, half a ton of sugar, and so forth. Coffee, we'd get that in big sacks, and roast it and grind it. Everybody had a grinder. And the tea, we used to get that in those big boxes, lined—all Chinese tea, and all in little quarter pound packages. They were all wrapped up with newspaper and a little red paper on the outside. I think that used to be five cents a pound.

Clothes

We wore short pants all the time, and bare feet, except in wintertime. Tough. My golly, you could jump on rocks. I remember the old man making us shoes. We killed our own beef all the time, and we always had cowhide, and Dad used to tan it with hemlock bark, and make us boots for the wintertime, and they weren't lacing boots. But them cowhides used to be pretty darn hard, I'll tell you. Somehow or other, you never had them soft. And, my goodness, in the morning we'd have a son-of-a-gun time to get them thawed out and dried out. We'd put a lot of oil on them. We used to make our own neat's-foot oil out of bones of the beef cattle whenever we butchered—the leg bones—and we'd use the hooves for glue. To peg the soles of the shoes we used to save all the axe handles. They were seasoned wood, and we'd sit around the fire in the wintertime and split that up and make pegs for the shoes. Then you would make a hole with an awl—a homemade one—and drive that wood in and cut it off.

Dad would make nails, too, different lengths, all out of that hardwood. And instead of being sharp, they were square. You'd bore a hole, (drive it in) and then you'd split the end of this nail and put a little wedge, made out of the same kind of wood, and drive that in and cut off the top. They say that never comes apart. The old man made all our own dressers and things like that, bedsteads and everything. He used to make them fancy, too, carve them from cedar. There wouldn't be an iron nail in any of that stuff, and you couldn't see where it was nailed.

My mother made every bit of our clothes, and all the quilts and sheets. Everything was home made. I remember saying to my mother, "I get old, the first money I ever get I'm going to get me a boughten shirt." My mother used to boil up all the sugar sacks, everything, with lye—make our own lye, you know—and get the stains out. That's what she made sheets and pillows out of.

Them days we used to buy flour by the ton. I remember a lot of our underwear and shirts would still have the name Five Roses on them. That was the main flour. Other times we'd buy bolts of that flanelette at the stores—it wouldn't be very expensive—and bolts of denim. Then she'd make our shirts and pants. Every time that a shirt was thrown away, or a coat, it was washed and unravelled and every button saved, and that was made into clothes for the youngest ones.

Mother used to knit socks quite often. But not so much as some of the other ones. And any kind of woolen sock, it was unravelled and knitted over and over again for the smaller children. Just the same way with the clothes, like pants and overalls.

The Dollar Bill

I was about five years old, and they were building the road and were camped right below, right on our place. We used to go over there, and the old cook used to give us

doughnuts and cookies and everything. We thought this was great. We used to talk with the fellows, and they'd take us fishing with them. They'd treat us kids good, everybody did, them days. But if anybody give us two bits or a nickel, we'd break our necks to go and give it to my mother, and she'd make us go and give it back.

When they was moving and they was all packing up, I would say, "Hey, how about this?"

"Oh, no, that's all right. Throw that away."

After they had gone, you know, I'd look over what shirts were left, things like that. She'd take them and boil them and run them through with lye and everything else. And there was a little fellow used to drive team: "Shorty," they all called him. He had a pair of overalls. When they bought new pants in those days—all the lumberjacks, and the fellows driving team and wagon—they'd cut the pant legs off just below the knees, then hem them by hand so they wouldn't be in the mud.

So I found this pair of pants of Shorty's, and they only had two little holes, one in the knee and a little hole in the back. I says to myself, "I'm going to wash them and make me a pair of pants out of that. Get my mother to clean them up." So, I began to go through the pockets; and I'm going through the watch pocket, and I find a little roll like a pea, and I unravelled a dollar bill. So I run and told my mother.

"Where did you find that?"

I told her, "Them pants is Shorty's."

Well, that was on the Thursday. Saturday morning, no school. They load me on the old horse and I had this dollar bill. My mother had pinned it inside my shirt pocket.

"Now, you go and give that back to Shorty. You go right up there."

They were camped up here about two miles and a half, and I got there just before lunch. They used to work all day Saturday, ten hours, them days. I remember the cook coming out, and the fellows just coming from work. And I had this old pony; and the foreman, his name was Forsythe, he says to the fellow looking after the horses—you know, the bull cook—he says, "Now take Pete's horse in and give him a good feed of oats."

I said, "No, don't give him no oats. He's not used to oats. He don't know what that is."

"Oh, never mind," he says, "give him a good big bucket of oats." Then he brought me in to dinner.

"Well," I says, "I'll tell you what I come for. Shorty," I says, "you left them pants there. Remember we was talking about 'em?"

And he says, "Yes."

"Well," I says, "I looked through the pockets and you left this dollar bill in it."

He looked at it and he says, "I never left no dollar bill."

"Well," I says, "I found it right there in the watch pocket, and my mother told me to come and give it to you."

"No. I never left no dollar."

I said, "You did. It was in them pockets."

"Well, come on and have dinner." So, we all had dinner.

"Well, stay till tonight."

I says, "No, I better get back. Mother might be worried about me."

So, the cook give me some doughnuts, nice big doughnuts, and I eat all I could. Then he give me a little bag of them and I got on the horse. They treated me like a man.

"Goodbye, Pete."

But I was bound to give Shorty that dollar. I didn't want to leave with that dollar or my mother might make me come back again. So Forsythe says, "Let's see that dollar, Pete."

He took it and he called out—I think there was nine in the crew—and he says, "Did you ever see this dollar before?"

"No."

"No."

"Ever see this dollar before?"

"No."

"Shorty, are you sure now?"

"No."

So, he goes down in his pocket and he says to me, "Well . . . ."

I says, "I've got to go."

"Now, wait a minute!" he says. "That dollar don't belong to nobody here. I never seen it before. You know what it is? It's an Angel that give it to you."

He knew I was religious, you know, a nice, good boy. "You tell your mother that an angel give you that."

So he hands me the dollar, and I unfold it and look at it, and it was a ten dollar bill!

"My goodness," I says, "That's not the dollar. That's a *ten* dollar bill."

"Well, what do you know?" the fellow said. "Well, what do you know? The angels turned that into a ten."

And, my goodness, I didn't know what to do. So I wrapped it and pinned it up, and rode down to give it to Mother. And when I got home I said, "Mother, that didn't belong to them at all. And while I was there," I says, "right in front of my face, by the time he give it to me it turned into a ten."

But she wasn't satisfied. Anyway, Shorty came down that night and she made me give it back.

The Tackle Box

Some fellows used to come up from Mission, the saloon keeper and the bartenders. They'd come up with the livery stable buggy and camp. And they'd fish and they'd have beer and all kinds of nice sandwiches. We were just like Indians, we'd sneak up and look at them, and they had them fancy rods and hooks and everything. Sometimes, if they happened to see us, they'd call us over, give us a little bit of a nip, a drink, you know, give us a sandwich or something, and we'd talk to them and go. This time I was watching them, and pretty soon they all left. I went to look at their lunches, because they'd leave a lot of them sandwiches already wrapped, and I'd take them. I wouldn't take anything that was unwrapped. My Mother said, "Don't take anything like that." But sometimes there'd be two or three nice sandwiches, or a piece of cake, all wrapped up, and I'd take that and run like hell home, divide it up and give it to the little kids, although we had a lot to eat.

This time I goes, and I looks, and here was this tackle box, full of nice hooks and everything. They'd forgot it; they'd been drinking and had throwed several bottles of booze and whisky back in the bush. I never used to bother with that, you know. But, oh, man, I'd have given my soul to have one of them hooks. I'd take them in my hands, then I'd put them all back, and put the box up in the crotch of a tree. I says, "They'll find them when they come back." I never told my mother or nobody about it. It was just below the school, and I'd say to the school ma'am, "Please may I go out?" And I'd sneak down there and take a look. I'd take a couple of them hooks and put them aside—there was all kinds of them, you know—and then put them back.

Next Sunday there was a different bunch altogether; and I went down after they left, and the box was gone, I suppose they took it. And, oh Lord, I'd have traded everything for one of them hooks. We used to make them out of nails—bend them and notch them. The old man would flatten them up and punch a little hole in them. We would unravel sacks, and take the raveling, double it up and twist it. Then we'd get some of this rosin pitch off of the spruce trees, and pass it over—like the old man used to do when he sewed—to waterproof the line, so it wouldn't unravel. And we used to catch lots of trout that way.

Nowadays I often think of those things, you know—the difference in life . . . . If I'd a taken that box, I would have had the fear that the Lord would have put me right into hell. So that's why I believe that a little religion for children is darn good.

Sometimes I'd bring supplies up to some of the old bachelors. The old man would pack the stuff on a horse, and put me right on top, and tie me up. I'd ride the old horse and I'd holler and they'd come out and unload me; and I'd stay over and have a big time.

There was all kinds of characters in them days. There was this old prospector who used to have a little shack on the lake here at the edge of the mountain. But every summer he used to come up and camp for a week right opposite from our place. He had three little fox terrier dogs. He had long black whiskers, and it was all rolled up in his hair. Some of us kids would pull it sometimes, when he'd be sitting down, and his whiskers would go pretty near his heels, and it was blue-black. He had long, long hair in great big rolls on his shoulders, same as his whiskers. And he always wore a blue overall jacket and a blue overall shirt. My dad and all the old timers used to call him P'tit Bleu—'Little Blue.' He was a little fellow, you know. I think his name was Ralph Corrie. He'd go to Vancouver for a month or two, and then he'd come up and be at the cabin there, and he was a swell cook. A bunch of us kids would go and visit him on a Sunday, and he'd make pies and stuff. The school teacher would go down with us sometimes.

Then he'd disappear up in these hills. He'd take his grub and he'd be gone for three months, sometimes. He'd come back with some gold. And I don't know how many of them tried to follow the old devil, but he'd hide, and they never could find him. Some of them would get scared and come back, and say, "Well, I'm not going to follow him any further, the old devil. We followed him and we lost him and we come back, and here he'd been sitting and watching us all the time, just on a big rock above us." They never could find where the devil the old fellow went and got that gold.

He lived in Vancouver, and owned two blocks down there. After he died, you know, we found out he had all kinds of money. But he liked to come up here in the hills and prospect and mine. He was kind of a mystery man; Little Blue—P'tit Bleu.

* * *

Them days, some stranger would come, and he'd go and stay with some bachelor. And he could stay there for a year or two, or six months or the winter; then he'd go. A lot of them fellows, I guess, were jumping the border or something. We had a fellow come up here. His name was Seymour, and he stayed for about six months with old Pete Claherty. Old Pete had a nice little mare; and I don't know if he sold some timber or something, but he got ahold of about $200.

One night we was having a dance. I was just a little kid, but we always used to go to the dances them days. About two o'clock in the morning old Pete came hollering down the road, bare feet and just his pants on and undershirt. This fellow had robbed him during the night, and old Claherty had woke up, and the fellow had hit him across the head with a club and knocked him out and taken his horse. They trailed him right down to Dewdney where he'd left the horse. But he'd swum across the river and got a boat; so they never got him.

There used to be another old fellow, Bergemeist, on Bergemeist Lake. They call it Allan Lake now. He just had a little bit of a shack. But he'd been all over the world, you know, mining. He knew Calamity Jane. He'd have his gold in a baking powder tin in another tin, and then in a box. He'd have it buried up there. He didn't trust everybody, but he trusted us kids, and we'd go over there sometimes. And he'd say, "Well, I need some money now. I guess I have to go to the bank." He'd get a shovel and dig it up, and take out a roll of bills, and say, "Well, I guess that'll last me for so long." And he'd bury it and pat it down. Put a board over it. He'd made his money from prospecting in gold, but he died poor.

* * *

This old Regis Hudon, one of the Hudon brothers, used to come over to our place with all the news and books and everything for my mother. He always had two pairs of glasses, one pair up on his forehead. He'd never use them when he was talking, but he'd put them on

and be excited about some big news he had to tell my mother. And pretty soon they'd get digesting this piece of news or this book or something. Well, he'd shove them glasses onto his forehead, then he'd say, "Wait a minute, now, Philamine, I'll read this other item." And he'd forget and put the other pair on. And they'd be talking again, and he'd shove the other pair under his chin. He had them on a string, you know. Then, when he'd be starting to read again, he'd say, "Where's my glasses? Where's my glasses? Any of you little rascals got my glasses?"

We'd laugh, we'd say, "Yeah, I just laid them over there."

"Well, give them to me." And he'd look and look. Sometimes he wouldn't find them until we started laughing, and then this look would come on his face and he'd find this pair up on his forehead and shove them down and look kind of mad, and, "What's the matter with this pair here?"

Billy Martin

This old Regis Hudon was quite a scholar, and my mother was the same. But most of them old fellows around there couldn't read nor write in them days. Old Billy Martin, he couldn't read at all. Fellows would come along peddling books, and he'd get a book and get us kids; and he'd say, "Now read this to me." Every time he'd get the paper, you know, "Read it!"

Well, we shouldn't have done it, but we'd read it all upside down, and we'd make it up. We'd tell him, "Well, that was a war, so many killed." Or he'd have a picture of a boat or a house. That was a big disaster or earthquake busted that house up. And he'd come down with the paper the next day and have it under his arm, "Did you hear about the disaster?" After a while my sister would say, "Oh, go on, you can't read, you old son-of-a-gun." And he had some of them fellows believing he could, you know. They'd stop at his place, and he'd tell them, "Come on up," and he'd read them all the news. They didn't know the difference.

He was a little old fellow with a moustache. Very spry—everybody was. He used to keep a few cattle and a few horses, then once in a while work on the road, or in the camps. It didn't take much to live, them days, you know; sell two or three head of beef, and that was enough. He used to have eight or nine head of cattle, a couple of horses. He'd come and help with the haying, and he never took no money. Well, everybody helped each other; you'd be mowing hay, and if the neighbour got through mowing hay and you had some left, he'd turn around and pitch right in behind, and say, "Well, we'd better hurry up and get all this hay down, it looks like rain or something." That's what old Billy used to do.

Any of us kids got sick, the old fellow would get on his horse and go to town. He'd come back drunk, but he'd bring back some candy and a bottle of brandy, and maybe a pair of blankets or a nice jacket or something. And he'd come in and kneel down at the bed and he'd be crying, "My poor little Pete." And he'd come back the next day and he'd say, "How's my little boy?" Even if he was sober, he was just the same. He'd buy a box of crackers and a box of apples, and after school he'd come down to the foot of the hill and he'd call all the kids, and he'd give us two crackers and an apple. That was a great thing, you know. He was very good-hearted.

We'd go and help him pick his potatoes, and at the end of that he'd give us two bits. And some of them used to have us working all day for a nickel. He'd always have a couple of apples or something to give us on the side; and we thought the world of him.

But sometimes we'd tease him a little bit, and he'd get mad, and he'd say, "Oh, you go on home! You son-of-a-gun, get out of here. You're not my friend no more."

I remember one time my brother Frank got mad at him, and Frank was pretty big then, and Billy didn't want nothing to do with Frank, not when he'd been teasing him too much about something. So we said, "So what are you going to do with him?" Every time he got mad at somebody he'd get his six-shooter, or his rifle, and was going to shoot them right between the eyes. But he wouldn't hurt a fly. He wouldn't even butcher beef, you know. He'd say, "Son-of-a-gun! Wait until I—goddam—where's my tirty-tirty?"

He'd get it down and clean it up, and he'd always put the shuttle back and set it there. "Wait until he comes!" Us little kids was sitting alongside of him, and pretty soon I seen brother Frank coming up the road.

"Here he comes! Where's my tirty-tirty? That son-of-a-gun. He sets his foot in that gate," he says, "he's going to get it right between the eyes."

Pretty soon Frank comes up to the gate, and you could see the old fellow wasn't reaching for his rifle. Frank opens the gate, just a little ways from the door, and a big smile on his face. And old Billy jumps up.

"Oh, my dear little brother, how come you wasn't here? We just had some apples and candy. But I knew you was going to come to see me." Two minutes before that he was going to shoot him between the eyes!

He sure was a great fellow for playing the violin. He had his little cabin up on the hill, and he used to get out on the veranda in the evening, especially Sunday, and play that violin. We'd sit home and hear it. He was quite an old-time violin player, but a good one. He used to play all the old time tunes, like the hornpipes and all those Scottish reels. He could play at the dances, you know, play anything at all.

After he died, some fellow got hold of that violin and it was a Stradivarius! I think he got $1,200 for it. It was one of the originals. The old man was always telling us, "I've got the best violin in the country." But he couldn't read or write.

The Raven

An old fellow named Snell come up there and bought one of them homesteads, and he had a partner called Richardson. They were in the lumber business. And Richardson would come fishing; and he had a fancy fishing pole, I guess the first one I ever seen. Old Snell used to pick me up and bring me with him to go fishing. They had a little cabin, and we left there one morning and had to walk about a mile to the lake, through the bush, along a trail. Well, we had breakfast and we got our fishing lines ready—Richardson had this fancy pole—and we started fishing. We got about halfway through and here's a raven come over the top of us.

"By golly," I says, "there's some bad luck."

Well any time there was a raven come over the place we'd say we were going to have some kind of bad luck. Somebody would break a leg, or you'd lose a cow or something, and that's the truth. I believed it too.

I says, "By golly, this raven come right over us, and he's heading right for the cabin. We better go back or we're going to have some bad luck—no use going fishing today."

Richardson says, "How's that?"

I says, "Every time a raven comes over our place we lose a cow or a horse or something. It's sure we better go back."

"Well, by gosh!" Snell says to Richardson, and he was winking at me, "The old bad men that used to be in the valley have come back. That's how they do. They get it in for you, and go and do some harm. But," he says, "it won't bother *us*, so we might as well go fishing, because we're not old-timers here. We never did anything bad to them people. But," he says, "when *I* die I'm going to come back and kill all Lagacé's cows."

"Would you really do that?" I says.

Well, finally he said he wouldn't.

We fished all day, and we got ten—me and Snell. I had a little homemade line with a big hook and some worms, and I was throwing it in and just a-pulling them out. Old Snell he kept taking them off the hook, then he'd bait my hook and throw it back in. And poor Richardson couldn't catch a-one. I'd say, "Well, you fish here." And he'd stand there and he never got a fish; he never landed one with his fancy line.

Well, sir, when we gets back, here was smoke. Everything burned down!

"Now," I says, "do you see what I told you about the raven?"

All I had in there was my old jacket. But they had their fancy rifles and a camera, and Richardson had a gold watch and about 300 bucks. We found the money and some of the gold. It was all matted together, melted, you know. But everything else was gone, the guns and everything.

Well, we walked down to this old Pete Claherty, about two miles, and stayed there overnight, had something to eat, and come back home the next day. They had to go to Mission. They had nothing, just old overalls and shirts.

If we had of turned back . . . . Snell had had his watch with him and we had looked at the time when the raven had passed, and it was just about half an hour after that when that cabin burned.

"Well," I says, "that's just about half an hour for it to get hot. That's just when the fire started."

So they believed in the raven.

* * *

Them days, everybody was superstitious, you know. We believed in ghosts, and the old people would tell ghost stories and they'd have us scared to go to bed. I believe they believed them, too.

There was a lot of cougar, and they'd holler. You don't hear that no more. It would generally be in the evening or at night. They'd scare you to death—just like some woman in pain or something. Well, that was sure to bring a death. Even my brother-in-law, if the dogs howled, was sure somebody's going to die. He'd make that dog stop right away. They claim them cougars, when there is going to be a death or an epidemic, they smell it.

My mother, she was just as bad. Every time somebody would die—one of her relations back east or some place—the next day she knew it. When her sister died in Quebec where she was born, she said she was sewing in the window and this little bird come along and flew right on her shoulder and chirped to her a little bit, then flew away again. There was always some sign. After anybody died, they'd come down to our place and they'd get talking over this, and say, "Oh yes, I knew that. He give me a sign."

Missionaries

Father Fouquet, the old missionary, used to come up to say mass on a Sunday, and he always used to stay with us. And he used to leave a surplice to put on. He'd have it there in a box.

The little chapel was in the house. It was the guest room, and candles and everything were rigged up on the dresser. When we had guests, Mother put everything away. But as long as there were no guests, she'd leave it the way it was. Every night she would kneel down and we would say the beads; and in the morning the same, and on Sunday the same when the priest wasn't there. But after we was eight years old, that was our business; we didn't have to.

Sometimes my mother would have to go to Vancouver somewhere. I remember one time when the old priest was staying with us, Mother and Father were both gone, and he looked after us children. He got us all into bed and tucked us in. Then the old fellow went to bed himself. In the morning he made us mush, just for us little kids—the old boys would be busy. It was a great big dish of something. And sometimes we didn't like it very good.

He'd say, "Isn't that nice now, children? Now all sit down."

He never put no cream or sugar on his mush, just put salt on it. He did that for his religion, you know. He didn't want to eat anything fancy.

"Now we'll all wash the dishes. Everybody help."

Then he'd sit down and make like he was playing a tune. "Get up and dance, little children." He was a nice old fellow.

We used to try to get my dad and the old priest drunk. But they was too smart for us. We'd fill the glasses. Then next day the old priest would say, "Ah, you gentlemen, see

here." He'd been pouring it into a jar or something under the table. He'd shoot with us, or go fishing, and we'd have a lot of fun, you know. And sometimes we'd bring him back to the mission, and, my golly, he'd feed us good and give us a little drink of wine. Then we'd play cards, and we'd stay overnight.

Later, there was another missionary that we used to like, too. His name was Father Maissoneuve. He was quite a fellow. He'd shoot in shooting matches, and he always used to take a little drink. When us boys were haying, he'd come up and take his coat off, even take his collar off, and help us hay.

"Come on boys. You got to finish this."

We was hauling hay off the prairie. It used to be a community affair. Everybody that got through their own haying could come and help. We used to buy a jug of whisky for about a dollar and a half in them days. Had her hid behind a haystack, but didn't want to let the old priest know it, so we snuck around there a couple of times. Pretty soon the old fellow come around the other end, and one of the boys had the jug and he grabbed it out of his hands. "Ah-hah! I thought there was some kind of shenanigans going on around back here. Give me that!" And he'd make as if he was taking an awful big drink.

"Now," he says, "I feel better."

And we thought we was putting it over him.

That was Father Maissoneuve. They never come up here for money. They used to pass the hat on Sunday. I remember sometimes looking at it. If they got a dollar and a quarter, that would be a big take.

Christmas and New Year

We always had some missionary there at Christmas, and everybody had to take their turn to bring the priest. When it would be George Rou leau's turn, he'd get so full of booze it wasn't sure when they'd get in. One time old Father Fouquet set out with this fellow, but he went to sleep alongside of the road, and the old priest—he was 80-odd years old—couldn't lift him back in. So he walked the rest of the way, and it was raining. When he got to our place it was midnight, just in time to have midnight mass. But he was all in, so we gave him some tea or coffee and a little drink of wine or something.

Them days all the family would be together on Christmas Day, no matter how far away they lived. They'd all be there, with their families. A lot of bachelors would be there, and people that had no family.

We never had no Christmas tree. We used to hang our stockings, though, around the stove. But we never got no money. We'd get a little candy stick—they had them coloured canes, you know—a little hard candy and an orange. You'd look forward to that. Sometimes a lot of them bachelors, they'd bring us some homemade bow and arrow, or a little wagon or a little dancing man.

It was a big event. There always used to be a big, big crowd. Often we'd have two or three tables, and a table for the little kids— they always ate in kitchen. When you got older, then maybe you had a table on the end. We never ate with the big people like they do now.

We raised everything -chickens and geese and turkeys. Turkeys was always for Christmas. And we'd start in the week before. Our mother used to make pork pies, ground-up pork—dozens of them—and mince pies. She always used to take a big 50 pound tub of mincemeat—use the necks of the beef. Oh, man, we had everything.

She'd make them steam puddings in bags, half a dozen of them. And when the dessert come in with candles, they always blew the light out. Mother used to have brandy and light the puddings in the kitchen, and bring them in with that blue flame. You don't see that no more, neither.

* * *

One New Year's we had roast geese, and got more visitors than what we thought. Mother said, "My goodness, what are we going to do? We've only got two geese, it will never go."

Well, I'd set a trap—I was about 16 then—and I had two or three of them young beaver. We used to eat them. Mother used to take the tails, and it was just like fish. Old Father Fouquet used to do that: get beaver tails and boil them. Then you can eat that on Friday: it's not like meat.

So I took these beaver, and I said, "I'll fix that. They'll taste just like goose."

You see, my father always used to send me to help my mother and the womenfolk in the kitchen when we had big crowds, haying or anything; they would always send me. That's how I come to be a good cook.

Well, we had them two geese and the three beavers, and I stuffed them. We always put the geese on the table, and the men of the house used to carve. That's old ranch style. But I says, "Gosh, we can't do that. How are we going to put them beaver there?"

"Well," she says, "*we'll* just cut it up this time."

So I sliced up all this goose, and mixed the beaver with it, and nobody knew any difference. Goose is just the same colour and tastes the very same.

* * *

At Easter we always used to have a sucking pig. We'd have to start cooking him the day before—stuff him and get him nice and brown, with a big apple in his mouth.

And most of the time Easter used to be a special day, flowers and nice weather. Everybody used to dress up in their best and go to church up there in the school. They built the church years afterwards, but by then I was gone.

PART TWO

A CHILDHOOD MOSAIC

GETTING THERE

Children who were born before their families started homesteading in the valley were not likely to forget their coming in. Whether they arrived by boat or stage, wagon or sledge, they often found themselves in a twilight of fir and cedar that could be somewhat frightening at first, even for some of the adults. It was a big adventure, nevertheless, and a turning point in everyone's life, even when they were too young to be really aware of what was happening.

Margaret Brown was only two years old in 1878, when her family settled on Hall's Prairie. For her father, David W. Brown, it was the end of a very long journey. Some twenty years before, he had left his home in Kilmarnock, Scotland, for the gold fields of California, and then gone to the Cariboo. When we hear of him next he is in Upper Canada. From there he returned to the Old Country, thinking perhaps to settle down. But he found it had changed a lot.

He only stayed about six months before he was back again in Ontario. His two brothers came out with him. But by this time the Civil War in the United States had broken out, and Ontario was just flooded with Americans working for their board—what they called Yankee skedaddlers. They were going away from the draft, because a lot of them didn't know which way to fight. So, as there was no work for them in Ontario, Father and his brothers went down into the states, where there were very few good men you could hire because they were all called up for the war. They travelled all over, wherever they heard of a good job. I heard my father say he thought he was in every state in the Union.

While he was in Ontario he met a young girl, and he carried her picture around in his pocket for four years. When he went to Iowa it was an early spring, so he took up a homestead there and went back to Ontario and got married. His brother and my mother's sister got married about the same time. The two young couples took the train to Chicago, which was as far as the railroad was built at that time, and bought a team and struck out across the country. And they were in Iowa for ten years.

But father didn't like it very well. It was hot winds and grasshoppers, and they didn't have very good crops. They had friends that had come out to Washington and had sent back a real good report on the way things looked out there. So Father sold out.

By that time the Union Pacific was built, and we came by train to San Francisco and took the boat to Victoria, another boat to Seattle, and a smaller one to Whatcom—it's called Bellingham now. Then we came to Ferndale on the Nooksack River in a canoe, and stayed with our friends in Ferndale for a time. But it was quite an undertaking. There were seven of us children. [MS]

His brother Archie had also come out to the coast and had found some good land on Hall's Prairie over in British Columbia. This was an open tract of country that reached down almost to the border. He and three other fellows had taken up adjoining homesteads and built a cabin right where the four corners met. Each of them slept on his own homestead in his own corner, thereby fulfilling one of the pre-requisites for proving up on their pre-emptions.

Archie told his brother that the soil was better there than in Ferndale. David come over to look, liked what he saw, and took up a pre-emption for himself. Once again his family had to move.

Previous page: First school in Mission district. (Photo: PABC No. 42135.)

But it was an awful proposition, because there was no road to amount to anything. It wasn't bad from Ferndale to the settlement where Blaine is now, and there was a sort of road up to the boundary line. But Father had to build a bridge over the Campbell River, and about three-quarters of a mile of road through heavy, heavy timber, before he could get near his homestead.

He built his cabin on the bank of a little creek, surrounded by immense fir trees, two and three hundred feet high. It was built of logs, and there were just two rooms: a kitchen in front and a bigger room behind, which was curtained off, like in two compartments.

His three oldest sons were with him, so he left them to keep the house warm while he went for Mother and the rest of us. He had acquired an ox team—that's the only kind of team that was going—and a sledge. The road wasn't fit for a wagon; it was just mud.

It was right in the middle of winter—in January, I think—and raining; and it took us all day to come with the sledge and our dry goods and groceries and everything piled up on it. It was long after dark before he got there; and my brother Jim said he knew we were coming, because he could hear me crying. [MS]

A few years after the Browns settled on Hall's Prairie they were joined by the Johnsons, a family from Nova Scotia. Fred Johnson was five or six years old at the time. His father had been working as a wooden bridge framer in the early years of CPR construction through the Fraser Canyon; and while the family was living at Yale, Fred had a little adventure of his own.

I was playing with a little homemade wagon that my father had fixed up for me down on the old Yale Road, just below where the new Yale Road is now. I could hear a thundering noise somewhere up the canyon, but I didn't pay any attention to it. I had gotten the wheels of this little wagon caught in the cleft of a rock, and I was trying to get it released, when around the curve came a herd of cattle, headed by a young cowboy on horseback. When he saw the trouble ahead with these wild cattle charging down, he rushed up; and I can recall him catching me by the collar and yanking me right up on to his horse. He asked my name—I had been taught to tell my name and where I lived—and I told him, and he told me not to cry. "Just sit quiet," he says, "and as soon as I get the cattle corralled, I'll take you home."

My mother was greatly excited about it, but I was all right. But there wasn't a piece of my wagon left more than just a sliver. It was trampled to pieces.

We came down from Yale early in 1882 to New Westminster, and my father went out into the Surrey country to look for land. He found a piece that he liked out in the Hall's Prairie area, and at that time the best way to get into that part of the country was by boat. So in November he and my mother, myself and my sister, set sail from New Westminster on a sloop. It was captained by Frank Hatt, and his assistant was his son Stephen. We left early in the morning, sailed down the Fraser River, through Canoe Pass and around Point Roberts.

I remember quite distinctly the captain calling to his son, Stevie, that he was going below to rest; he was tired. And he asked Stevie to let him know when he could see the white rock. The white rock was known at that time as a sort of guide to navigators coming into Semiahmoo Bay, both on the American side and in here. There's a long tongue of land sticks out, Semiahmoo spit, and it's dangerous. Vessels coming into Drayton Harbor—or Semiahmoo, as the Americans called it—had to head for the white rock until they were opposite the channel going into Blaine. They depended on that to keep them off this spit that stuck out under the water. Fifteen or sixteen years later they built a lighthouse there which operated automatically. But as I recall, there was a huge lantern placed on the rock, and that was lighted at night.

We arrived off the beach at White Rock after dark, and were met where Campbell River enters the bay by two young men from Blaine. There was no settlement of any kind near by, no stopping place. It was all Indian reserve, and the Indians had built a huge log pile, which they had set on fire to give us a guiding light to come in by.

The vehicle that took us to Blaine was an ox team and sled. The furniture and articles which my parents had brought with them were unloaded from the boat and brought over next day. My father had rented a place out on Hall's Prairie, and we stayed in Blaine for three days

while he got the house cleaned up and prepared. Then we were moved out, again by ox team, and we lived there throughout the winter, while he built a house on his own property. [FJ]

Another of those patches of prairie—this time in Langley—was settled by a little group of Prince Edward Islanders. It got to be known as Biggar's Prairie, and Ira Biggar recalled how at first it was just a big pond with beaver dams. His father, Thomas Biggar, brought his family out in 1887, and they landed in Vancouver on Christmas Day.

We went up to Fort Langley by riverboat, and took a stage from there to Murray's Corners—Murrayville it is nowadays. It was Fraser York's stage. He carried the mail up to Sumas at that time. We stayed at Nels Nelson's place on the Yale Road for a week, while they were getting the house fixed up, and then went into the prairie. I wasn't quite nine, but I remember walking on this trail through gullies and across creeks and up hills. Our things were brought in with a team of mules on a sleigh. They called them jumpers in those days, and they were made with vine maple runners, bent over and fastened down. And the top was made of cedar poles. [IB]

When John Churchland brought his family into the woods he had no intention of being a farmer. He had been in the gents outfitting business, and, according to his son Jack,

He expected to open a small general store, for which he was very ill-adapted; and he did just that. I think he came out partly for reasons of health; and, of course, with the CPR having just opened, there was a good deal of advertising going on of the West. We came out from Liverpool in 1890, when I was six and a half years old. After six weeks in Vancouver we moved out to Surrey Centre in a stage that used to run through Westminster, along the Yale Road and down the Coast Meridian to Blaine. It closely resembled a democrat wagon. But it did have a top on it and curtains at the side, so you were protected from the rain.

The roads were terrific—just country trails, narrow and muddy; and we bumped along till we were put off at Surrey Centre where my father had bought six acres and an old house from a man named Richardson, and was building his store on the side of the house. But we first moved into an old split cedar house and store on the Old McLellan Road, down below the English church. It had been owned by Abraham Huck, one of the first settlers in Surrey Centre, who had died the year before we came. So we ran the store there for a few months. I remember that the hillisde where we were living was carrying a heavy crop of Douglas fir—trees up to four and five feet in diameter. There was an abundance of wild flowers, and the country was still unspoilt. [JC]

William Cornock was about ten years old and his sister Beulah about six, when they and their family left their farm at Elgin, Ontario, for a homestead in the Fraser Valley. That was in 1900. Twenty years earlier their father, John Cornock, had come across 150 acres for sale in Glen Valley.

It had been taken up as a pre-emption by one of the Hudson Bay employees' sons, a man by the name of James Cromarty. He looked it over; there was a lot of bush on it, cottonwood; but quite a lot of it was meadows, and pea vine was growing as high as your shoulder, he said. There was a beautiful creek running through it, full of fish, a little log cabin on a knoll; and he fell in love with it at once. So he bought it: he paid $1,000 for it. But that was a year when there was no snow and no high water. He didn't know then that it was subject to flooding; he found that out afterwards. But there was a scheme on then for dyking all the lowlands in the Fraser Valley, so he went back to Ontario intending to come out again when they got the dyke in. They did put a small dyke in, but it washed away in the 1894 Flood.

We left Ontario on April 18th, 1900. There was my mother, father, and my brother a year younger than I, and two younger sisters. Mother and the girls were in tears at leaving

the old home, but for us boys it was an adventure. We came in a colonist car. At one end of the car they had a big range, and they had coal for cooking. And you could bring hundreds of pounds of freight in household goods.

When we hit the Prairies the little gophers were sitting up along the track. There were two other young lads with my brother and I, so before we'd got half across the Prairies we'd thrown all the coal away at the gophers. So every time the train made a stop, everybody piled out and grabbed chips and stuff to make a fire with, so you can imagine us boys weren't very popular. I don't think we hit any gophers, but they sure were tempting targets, sitting up along the railroad track. It's a wonder we didn't fall off, because we were hanging out on the steps to get a good shot at them. The train was full. The great rush was on for a homestead on the Prairies.

I think it took us five days on the train, if I remember right; and we landed at Whonnock. A neighbour of my aunt's and uncle's, Tom Warren, met us with a fishing skiff and brought us across the river; and we went to our uncle's and aunt's house on River Road. That was in the early part of May.

My uncle was running a farm for the late William Mathers. It was a big farm up at the upper end of Glen Valley.

When we left Ontario the snow was still in the fence corners; and along the Great Lakes there was lots of snow. But when we got out here the grass was a foot high. Everything was green, the trees were green, the late apples were in full bloom. We thought we'd landed in the Garden of Eden. And the first thing we did was shed our boots and stockings and go barefoot. The kids in those days were always waiting for the warm spring days so they could go barefoot. [WC]

We stayed at my uncle's I think two or three months, because there was high water right after that. Of course, the valley was right open to the river then, and the lower land would be flooded. I can remember the first time we came to our farm and this little log cabin. It had been a trapper's cabin and was on a ridge, right on the side of Beaver Creek. This same fisherman, Tom Warren, brought us there in a boat, and we came over the tops of the fences. [BP]

Settling In

Families came into the woods in a variety of ways, and from all directions. But once they got there, they nearly all found themselves in a struggle for survival that was common to everyone around them. In their relative isolation they had to rely on their own resources. Even the younger children had no choice but to pull their weight. "The father and mother and the kids were all like one, them days," said Dan Cummings.

What concerned the parents concerned the children, too, so that their memories of these earliest years are mainly about the daily struggle to get by and put down roots: clearing the land, sowing the first crops, coping with the surrounding wilderness. But first there had to be a place for them all to live, even a temporary one, while the house or cabin was built. If they were lucky they found an "immigrant shed", or rented an empty house, or stayed with accommodating neighbours. Otherwise they'd have to be left somewhere while dad went ahead to put up a cabin, or get someone else to do it for him.

Shelter

Before he had his cabin built, Dad lived in a great big hollow stump. He and his pal put a roof on it, but I don't think they put in a door; they just left it open. They had a little stove, and they bached there until they got a log cabin built. [WR]

Lumber mills were few and far between, but a clever carpenter, like Bert Williams' father, could drag the cedar out of his own woods, split it into planks and shingles, and build a proper house. And it's surprising how quickly it could be done in those days—with a little help—particularly if a log cabin was all they wanted.

A log cabin. I know what that is. I was brought up in a log cabin. You'd saw off long logs of cedar wood the length of the cabin, and then take and split them open into pieces and hew the side off square. Then they'd be dovetailed and notched into the corners.

A one storey cabin with a fireplace and chimney where Santa Claus could go up and down. The chimney was made out of clay, mixed with grass and slats that were put back far enough so the fire wouldn't get through the mud.

There was an iron arm to hang things on, and it was just about the same as cooking out in the woods when you're camping. They had a big cast iron pot about 16 inches deep. The bread was mixed up into a big loaf and put in there, and the lid put on top. Coals were raked off to one side, and the pot was set down in the coals. Then the coals were banked around it. And, you know, that makes some of the finest bread going. [WM]

We had a very comfortable log house with a kitchen, a sitting room, two bedrooms downstairs and two upstairs, with a spare room that was always filled by the minister or the teacher or somebody. And anybody that came from Prince Edward Island went to Dan Nicholson's and stayed with them till they got a job. [WR]

Clearing

The first farm in the Lower Fraser Valley was started by the Hudson's Bay Company on Langley Prairie; and it was only natural that the earliest settlers—those that came in the 1860's and 1870's—should choose the unencumbered

floodlands of Chilliwack, Sumas, Matsqui and the Delta. Except at high water, they could run their cattle on the wild grass and pea vine from the day they got there. The forests of Surrey and Langley were another matter entirely.

It was all big Douglas firs, you know. There was no underbrush. There were places you could go through on horseback, pretty near. You take on the Livingston Road and Biggar Road, and all them roads, the trees were so thick the limbs would be touching each other over the road. And when you worked in the woods you wouldn't see the sun only once in a while. [DC]

When I first remember it there was these huge Douglas firs, dead, and the cedar trees standing up with long trunks. Some of them didn't have hardly a branch; they were all burnt off. And they remained in that condition until the shingle men come into this country and cut them all down, and hauled them out to the various shingle mills and sawed them up. My dad told me he thought that the place had been all burned over about three years before he arrived here.

So there were quite a number of acres that didn't require so much clearing. That was on the flat land. But when you got on to the more rolling sandy land, the huge trees were still there. It took lots of powder and hard work to get them out. [WM]

The way they would do it, they would maybe fall an acre or half an acre—whatever they could. They'd have a two-inch auger—one of them big augers you crank by hand—and bore a hole in a tree for maybe 10 or 12 inches, and about four feet up from the ground. And then they'd put another one at an angle to meet it, just to make a chimney. And they'd burn vine maples, and get these hot, red coals and put them in there. Then the trees would burn pretty well as if you were sawing them down. I've seen them set the auger holes in before dinner, and they'd be down next morning. You'd hear them falling in the night. [DC]

Father did a whole lot of them like that; and he would have all these trees burning at once. And he generally had them falling the way he wanted them. But one time I remember he came flying and said, "The tree's gonna go backwards, and I'm afraid it will come right through the house." So we got out quick as we could and ran away. But the tree fell four or five feet from the edge of the house and didn't do very much harm. But we could see the limbs flying end over end, pretty near to the shack. [MS]

They used to have bees. They knew each other for ten miles around, and there'd be 20 or 30 men, and eight or ten yoke of oxen. The logs would be bucked up so the oxen could handle them. They'd have a seven foot crosscut saw with one man on each end. And the bees were to gather the logs together, roll them up and make piles of them, so they could burn them. They'd choose sides, and have a foreman on each side, and see who could get the most piles up by daylight, burning the loveliest timber you'd ever see. Lots of them trees would be worth over $100 today. Then perhaps they'd go to the next place the next week. [DC]

I can remember the wonderful bonfires. The neighbours would come from miles around with their oxen, and they'd have hot meals for the men. The women would have a quilting bee at the same time. And there was a bachelor who had a nice red shirt. It was a hot day, so he took it off and put it on a stump. The women went out and got it, and cut it up to make roses in the mats they were hooking. At night, when he was looking for his shirt to go home, they told him to come and see it. And here were these lovely red roses in the mats.

Then they'd dance all night—take out the kitchen stove and the table, and everything, and just have a good time. They couldn't afford lots of drinking, but there was always lots of food, it seemed. They'd have sandwiches and cake. Mostly there was a man who could play the fiddle, and sometimes there was a jews-harp and a mouth organ. And I remember the women would line up, and the men opposite them, and they'd play this tune and go back and forth—good big boots on, no slippers. The Virginia Reel was one of the dances. "Swing 'em on the corner." My brothers, when they got older, used to call the dances. [WR]

Then it was back to work, every family on their own—clearing, ploughing, planting, in a new and uncontaminated soil.

The big fir stumps were left, of course. Some of the real big ones were eight, ten, twelve foot across, and you couldn't do anything about them. There was no powder them days. Well, there *was* powder, but nobody could afford to buy it. They just ploughed around them and left them there. In later years they got powder and blew them up. They had block and tackle and would pull them out in pieces.

They would put in enough potatoes for the winter. They all had potatoes and turnips. You could grow turnips in them days and cabbage; just broadcast them. Buy 50 pounds of beans and 50 pounds of rice. I knew lots of families—in fact, ourselves—if we had sugar and flour and a couple of pigs—pork, you know—well, you never starved. You could have a big bowl of rice at night, and that was a good supper.

There was lots of deer, and there was quite a lot of black bear. Some people would eat the hind quarters. I remember my uncle had a muzzle-loading gun, and my cousin and I used to go into the wild apple trees on the Brown Road there. We'd go in the evening and sit on a log, and the grouse would start coming into the crab apple. And we'd shoot just what we wanted—five or six apiece—and then go home. But lots of fellows never took to hunting. [DC]

I remember in our first winter when the ducks came in. The roar of them was like thunder, there were thousands in the flock. And we often saw deer bounding through the tall grass in the fields. [WC]

The country was prolific, and in season could supply them with much of their food and fuel. But money was scarce, and certain staples could only be bought or bartered for. This meant that many farmers would have to find employment somewhere else during the winter months, leaving their wives and children to fend for themselves on the lonely homesteads. When they came home again, they went on clearing the land, hoping that some day it might produce a living for them.

My dad, the same as other homesteaders in the area, had to get out and make the odd dollar wherever possible—whether it was working on the roads, or working in the camps—wherever there was a dollar to be made. Several months in the year he fished in the Fraser River. That was in the days when the sockeye were very plentiful. [RW]

Everybody fished in the summer to get a bit of cash money. The first summer we came out my dad and my uncle decided they'd go fishing. So they got a little skiff and a bit of net; and at that time fishing, I think, opened at six o'clock Sunday night. Well, my uncle had these cows to attend to, so it was getting on eight o'clock before they went down to start their drift, and the fishermen had all quit.

They said, "Oh, it's no use you going out now because there's no fish. We've come in. There's no fish."

"Oh well," they said, "we got all ready. We'll go and take a drift anyhow—catch one to eat maybe."

So out they go and they caught 500. Well, you can imagine two greenhorns, and this little skiff, and this bit of a net with 500 fish! I guess maybe with the advice of the other fishermen they just dragged it to the shore, and hauled the net out on the beach. The full-time fishermen, they couldn't get over that. But, you know, that's the way the fish came in those years. [BP]

A lot of them would go down and work in the Royal City mills; they used to get one dollar a day. They could get enough for a sack of sugar and two barrels of flour. And they'd get a case of coal oil. Coal oil used to come in cases; there were two five-gallon cans in a

box. Well, that's about all they could buy. They had their own meat. They'd raise a couple of pigs and put them in a barrel, salt them down. Some of them would smoke them.

As they got on, they'd get a team of oxen, maybe, and two or three cows. They'd grow hay and oats. Some of them would, maybe make ten or twelve, twenty pounds of butter in a week. They'd come down to the store and trade it off for groceries. But there were a lot of the women didn't know how to make butter—couldn't get the cream out of it. You've got to work it an awful lot to get the cream out of it, or it will go sour. Lots of times when the storekeepers bought butter, they had to throw it away. [DC]

We got some cattle—started with heifers. The first couple of years was kind of tough, till the heifers came in and we started shipping cream to Westminster. Every year we were subject to a certain amount of flooding; but there were knolls—we called them islands—and in high water the cattle moved on to them and stayed there. And after the water went down we cut wild hay—slough hay. So we got through all right.

There was a small barn on the place, but the second year it took fire and burned down. So we just went out into the bush. All between here and Aldergrove was forest. It was tax land, and some of it belonged to a land company in Vancouver, who gave us permission to cut any old timber wanted. So we built that big barn right out of the bush—split the shakes, cut the rafters, hewed the timbers. All we bought was planks for the flooring.

Anybody that was building a barn, they'd have a bee for raising the timbers. All the barns were originally built like that. You just sent word that you were having a barn raising on such and such a day, and everybody came. Some would bring pulleys, ropes or peevies or hammers, axes, anything they'd think they'd need; they'd all have tools. And there was a foreman or leader, and everything was put up by hand by pulleys and pike poles. It was quite an event. You were standing up there on those small hewed timbers, up maybe 25 feet off the ground, and if you weren't used to going high it was kind of a nerve racking experience. You had to walk around up there. Then they brought the rafters up and nailed them together, and raised them, and usually there'd be half a dozen women come to help with the cooking—it was a kind of a picnic. In six years we saved enough to build this house. But the barn always comes first on a farm, before the house. [WC]

AROUND HOME

Anyone descended from the pioneers or habitants of the eastern provinces would have known what to expect when it was their turn to pioneer. But for many another there must have come a day when owning 160 acres of bush was no longer a novelty, but a seemingly endless struggle. If a man had no ties, no wife or family, he could simply get up and leave. The land would revert to the Crown. If he had made improvements to the extent of 10 shillings for every acre, he might even realize a small profit. A number of them did.

They just proved up and mortgaged. They'd maybe have three or four acres cleared, and they'd have some apple trees. Then, after they were here for three years, they'd go to town and mortgage for $1,000 or $1,200, and that's the last we'd see of them. After seven or eight years there wouldn't be half a dozen people on all the roads. [DC]

For the family man, however discouraged he may have been, there was usually no way out. He was stuck with it. A year round job in a lumber mill would have paid him no more than a dollar or two a day; while back on his homestead there'd be game in the woods and vegetables and fruit in his garden. He could raise a few chickens, and his cow could graze along the trails. Eventually he'd get enough land cleared to produce things that could be sold in the New Westminster market or the lumber camps, starting, perhaps, with eggs, butter, and pigs, and sometimes hay and oats. By that time they had put down their roots. They could even be living in a house, with the little cabin relegated to the chickens or the pigs.

Pioneer life could be very hard on the women, whose role it was to provide comfort and sustenance for the rest of the family. Some were profoundly unhappy,—at least to begin with. "I used to cry every day for about four years to go home" said one of them.

On the other hand there were those who appeared to thrive on it—like the mothers of Bert Williams and Pete Lagacé. Or like Margaret Brown's mother.

I think Mother could do more things, and do them well, than anybody I ever saw. She was a good carpenter. And she could handle an axe pretty good, too. Our cabin was built on the bank of a creek. Of course Father was busy, he hadn't time for anything extra. So she dug out a great big opening in the bank, just above the creek, and built a nice little log cabin in it for a dairy. She covered it with shakes she had split, and planted hops over the top. And it was a lovely cool little dairy. She made splendid butter; she got the name of making the best butter in the whole country, and the storekeepers in Westminster all wanted her butter.

Clothes

She was a splendid cook, and a dandy baker. She was a fine tailoress. She even made a suit for Father, and she made all my brothers' clothes till they were nearly men. She made all our dresses. And she could embroider and tat, crochet, and knit. She used to knit all the men's socks. My father could knit, too. He learned to knit when he was in the old country, and in the evening both my father and my mother used to sit down and knit their socks. They could knit anything. [MS]

They had a few sheep and they'd shear them. Then Dad would card the wool, and Mother would spin it and dye it. She would gather the bark off the barberry tree, and a kind of green and white moss. That made a kind of green dye, and the bark would be brown. She'd mix them and boil them. An Englishwoman that was there had a spinning wheel; and

when she left, Mother bought it. So in the winter evening Dad would sit there smoking his pipe and carding this wool into long curls; And Mother would sit there and spin it—and they'd be talking Gaelic. Of course, we never learned to speak Gaelic, because they would never tell us what they were talking about. So we never carried any tales.

It was a big day when we'd get a parcel from Prince Edward Island, from relatives. There'd be yards of this homemade cloth, so we'd have dresses. We didn't like it, when we got up into our teens, it wasn't as nice as if it came from the store. It was very coarse stuff, and they called it drugget. If you had a dress of that now it would be worth something. [WR]

When the 24th of May came, the heavy winter wear all came off. We wore heavy winter wear because the winters used to be quite severe. Then of course, as soon as it got warm enough our shoes came off. By that time the toes were all out, anyway. So we went barefoot to school from then on. Then in the autumn we'd get shoes again. Father bought us boy's shoes. [LR]

I was the fifth son in our family, and, of course, they were sure I was going to be a girl. They had all the clothes prepared for a girl, but I fooled them. But I had to wear the clothes, anyway, because they didn't have any other clothes for me. And I had these long curls. When I was a youngster they never cut boys' hair until they got to be two or three years old.

Then, when I was just under two years old, the stork happened to be good to me, and brought a little sister; so my dresses were taken off me, and I was clothed in a little pair of pants and a jacket made out of flour sacks, because we couldn't afford to buy much clothes in those days. We had a big family, and times were pretty hard. Then they cut my curls all off and turned me loose. And I was a real boy from then on. [FT]

You could buy what they call blue denim. You could buy that in the web. And there was quite a few of the women sewed that into trousers or jackets for us, when we were younger. When we required larger garments, it was cheaper to buy them. [WM]

You could get a pair of overalls in the stores for 75c. [AH]

Although they made their own clothes a good deal, my brother got two suits of clothes sent from Timothy Eaton's in Toronto. How he ever got two at the one time in those days I don't know. Lucky if you could afford to buy one. But he had these two suits. And in 1893 on a Sunday morning my father put on a big roaring fire and went off to this church service. He was the worst man to make fires I ever saw in my life. It was cold weather; and the east wind was blowing, and it blew a spark over into the eddy formed by the "L" shape of the building. It got under the shingles and set the whole thing agone. I was out with my brother in his garden getting some vegetables for dinner, and I saw smoke coming out all over the roof of the thing.

Well, anyway, these two suits were hanging at the head of the stairs, and Wilf—he was only a little kid then, too—he remembered where they were. One of them he liked very much, and the other one he didn't. So he grabbed the nice suit and threw it out the window, and left the other one there to burn. Then he staggered down the stairs in the smoke. They didn't save a thing else out of the house. [JK]

Food

We had good food when I was a young chap. We lived very well. No canned stuff ever came into the home. We baked our own bread; pickles and everything were all put up. And anything I know of the old-timers they lived much the same. They never bothered with canned goods. I know that none ever came into our house, except a can of syrup. We didn't even have chocolate bars. There was no money floating around, like there is at the present time. But flour was cheap. You could get a sack of flour for a dollar, and a hundred pound sack of sugar for three and a half or four dollars. [AH]

There were apples and pears and plums, and the like of that. In fact, nearly everybody here in the early days put in an orchard. There were lots of wild backberries, and there was quite a lot of fruit that was sun-dried in the summer time. To a great extent you were living off the land. Of course you had to have flour; and you had to have oatmeal, sugar, and salt, and the like of that. Sometimes you had to buy your own meat. You didn't always have butchering. [WM]

My father killed his own beef, and we put it down in barrels—corned the beef. I remember him butchering quite a lot of hogs. He was expert at curing bacon; and then we smoked it. We had bacon and beef to last us all year. [AH]

For breakfast we had porridge, of course—got it from town. Dad didn't grow grain until quite a few years afterwards. Then they'd thrash it with a flail, which was like two sticks fastened together with shoelace leather. They'd flail it around and that would take the grain out. Then after a good many years Dad used to take the grain down to Langley in a rowboat to the grist mill, and bring the flour back home. It wouldn't be refined flour, it was good wholesome flour. So we were never sick.

In the middle of the day we had bread and milk, I guess. We had a cow, and chickens. Mother always did up jam from wild berries, and eventually they got fruit trees—apples and plums. Those days she didn't have any sealers, but there'd be whisky bottles. They had one bottle a year at Christmas time. Mother would dip a piece of twine in coal oil and tie it around this bottle up near the top, and then burn the string. It would burn all around the bottle. Then she just hit the neck of the bottle on the edge of the table, and it would come off as clear as could be. Then she'd have that for jam and cover it with paper dipped in the white of an egg to stick it on. And it was always good; we never lost any. We always had lots of jam. Once in a while they would get some wild honey. The Lehman boys—Mount Lehman was named for them—they'd find a bee's nest, and they always gave us honey.

For supper there'd be fried potatoes and fish—salmon bellies—they used to salt it to have in the winter time—and lovely great big potatoes. It sure was good. Potatoes were the first thing they'd put in. I remember when it was potato digging time we'd stay home from school. There'd be a fire burning a stump out, and we kids would put a potato in the ashes, come back later, and there'd be a lovely baked potato, mealy and white; just have pepper and salt and butter on it. I'd like to have one right now.

I remember when I was very small Mother used to make egg gravy. It was milk and eggs, thickened up and put on our potatoes. I remember one night the minister was there for supper—they'd always stay for supper—and I said, "We used to have fish all the time, and now we have nothing but egg gravy." I was pulled out by the ear.

Dad never hunted. He didn't like hunting, so we never had any wild game, just fish. Eventually, when there'd be a calf big enough, they'd butcher it, and then we'd have meat. But we liked the fish better than anything. In years to come we had pigs, but never a lot of them—just enough to have a nice roast of pork once in a while. I remember at Christmas Dad always had a young porker to kill, one that wouldn't weigh a hundred pounds. It would be just as tender as turkey, and much nicer.

Mother had ducks afterwards. We had a friend there one day, and she had a little boy with her; I guess he'd be about three. He'd come in and he'd say, "Killed a duck!" But they paid no attention to him, and away he'd go and come back after a while, "Killed a duck." So they thought they'd go out and investigate. And here were these little ducks lying around. He'd killed them with a stick. I don't think they licked him—but they felt like it. [WR]

Toys and Games

The self-reliance that was so very much a part of pioneer life, extended to children's toys and games. They invented their own, often reflecting the adult life around them. Just as boys today will play with guns and trucks and space-helmets, so with those children of another century. "I can remember as a little kid," said a

rancher who had grown up in the Nicola country, "spools were horses, marbles were cows." And down among the woods and meadows of the Lower Fraser Valley they had wagons and wooden dolls.

I can remember going around the spruce stumps and picking off the gum. That made dandy chewing gum; it lasted for two or three days. When we'd cleaned up all the stumps, then we tried to light a fire to a spruce tree to make more gum, but that wasn't very successful. Father always smoked a pipe; he was never without it. So we thought we'd get something to smoke, too. We brought in leaves and dried them under the stove, and there was bullrushes and different things, but it wasn't very successful. [LR]

We would play house. The fences were made in those days of rails—snake fences, they were called. And the little area, where the rails came together and formed a 'V', we covered with moss from the woods at the back of the farm; and that was our carpet. Then we got very fine moss and laid it along the rails, and these were shelves for cupboards. We didn't have any little tea sets, like the children of today, and Mother couldn't afford to give us new dishes, or anything like that. But supposing a nice pretty vase had been broken, or a dish, we would plead for a piece of that, and break it, maybe, into smaller pieces. And these were our very wonderful pieces of china, which, in our imagination, had come all the way from France. [NP]

I look at the beautiful toys the children have today, and think of how we appreciated such little things. We never saw an orange, except at Christmas time, never; and Christmas presents quite likely were handmade. The men would maybe make some little toy, if they were handy at it, or whittle something out—some animal. Maybe the mothers would make the girls a handkerchief or scarf, something to wear. And if you were very lucky you got a doll. That was something out of this world, a doll. I had one friend, and she had a wooden doll she thought the world of, and that's the only doll she had—just a handmade, wooden doll. The boys, they got a jack-knife, likely. That would suit them. [BP]

We used our Christmas present, if it was a pocket knife, to make bows and arrows. We hardly ever got anything that was more valuable; and we never had any toys. Or if we had toys, we made them. We'd cut rings off logs and make wagons—like a settler's wagon type. But those kinds of things we made ourselves. That was our own idea.

The Tuesday after the Westminster fire—the fire was on Sunday—we went into town, my brother and myself and my dad. I was only a codger then, ten years old, but I remember the buildings were flat—smoke coming up and the firemen here and there with their hoses trying to put out the last of the fire. Well, we kids got around, and at Trapp's hardware—I'm pretty certain it was Trapp's at the time—we found six-shooters lying all over the place. Those days they were common weapons. So we got these six-shooters, and for a long time they were the best toys we had.

During the summer we pretty nearly lived like Indians. We made our own bows and arrows, and we could shoot with them pretty much as good as we could with anything else. We'd ramble off in the woods. And I've heard my mother say many times afterwards she never knew just where we were, and when we would be back.

People would say, "Well, where have they gone? What are they doing?"

We found all the berries we wanted to eat. We could get huckleberries and blackberries when the berry season was on. The woods were full of them. Many a meal I have made out of the leaves and bloom of the Oregon grape. It's got a prickly leaf on it, but when the leaves are young, just coming up, they are very tender, and the bloom is the same.

We'd never think about going home. We'd be gone all day; and goodness knows how far we went into the woods. We'd ramble and ramble. I've often wondered since why we didn't get lost.

In those days you would get out in the bush and there would be absolute quiet. Then once in a while you would hear a buck deer snort. In the fall of the year he'd let a kind of snorty whistle out, and you knew he was looking for trouble. Or once in a while you would hear an old bear calling her cubs. She had a peculiar sound. It was not very loud. It was just when she wanted her cubs around.

A peculiar thing was that we never had a fear of a wild animal. There were cougars—we knew that—and there were bear. There were deer and bobcats, as we called them, and 'coons, and those kinds of things. But we never had the slightest idea of being afraid of them. And I've often thought it was rather odd, because most people have a fear of those animals. [AD]

We had our own games. You never see them any more: prisoner's base, pump-pump-pull-away, and that sort of thing. Then there was blindman's buff, which we used to play inside if it was a rainy day. When the snow came it was fox and goose right away. We tramped out a great big circle with a core in the centre and trails running out like the spokes of a wheel. Somebody was the fox, and if you were caught away from the centre you were a goose. You were out of it. [WG]

We used to play what we called fox and hounds, and one of us would be the fox, and the rest the hounds. We'd give this fox a head start; then the rest of us would go catch him. And he'd run all over the country. We generally ended way down there by the Indian ranch. And first thing you'd know, the school bell would ring, and there was nobody there to go to school. Then we'd get a working over. [JK]

We used to play nobbies. We had our own lacrosse sticks, and played our own kind of baseball and football. But there wasn't much organization to football: just kick the ball.

We could go swimming in the creeks. And in the fall, of course, as soon as we got old enough to carry a gun, we were out hunting. [WG]

Well, there was such freedom. You could go anywhere you wanted, fish wherever you wanted. As long as you used a little reason, you could shoot anytime, almost. That was our main meat supply through the winter, was the deer. It was wonderful deer game country then. Within two or three hundred yards of us here there was about a quarter of an acre of a lovely skating pond. It was full of bush, and we cleaned it out and made a really nice pond of it. That's where we learned to skate. Skating, hunting and swimming, those were my three favourites. [GR]

We had a regular bathing-place, and other young fellows used to come down and bathe on Sundays only. We never seen any girls, and we didn't wear bathing suits. Oh, it was a happy life. And when I was a young fellow and the floods were up on the prairie, I lived in the water practically two months of the year on rafts and rowboats and all that sort of thing. And the fact is, I was naked about two thirds of the time. We had a lot of stock and I was in the water practically every day getting cows up so that we could milk them in the evening.

The '94 flood, I went through that. I was 14 years old. The dam broke, we heard a roar, and the '94 came in. And we had to get all the stock off at the last minute. Then we had the experience of hunting 25 cows all over the woods to milk them twice a day. We had to keep bells on them. [AH]

My brothers used to trap mink. And once in a while they'd get a skunk. They'd take it into the woodshed, and we were all growling away about the scent of it, you know, because it would hang around there for quite a while. I think they used to sell these skins somewhere in Westminster. In those days the kids all had something to do. We didn't have the problems they have nowadays with teenagers. They were too busy. [MB]

Chores

The kind of toys that we had was hoes and shovels and axes and files. And as far as toys is concerned, if you don't know anything about them, you don't wish for them. Well, you made bows and arrows, and the like of that, for yourself. You occasionally had some baseball games, and you made your own baseball bats. You could roll up a piece of rag and wind some yarn or cotton around it to make a ball. They didn't have fancy balls when I went to school.

We used to have a hatchet, with a handle about a foot and a half in length, and that was used to cut wood with. When we started we weren't old enough to keep the stove going, but we did some of it, and my dad cut the rest. I remember the first tree I cut down with that hatchet. I guess I was around six at that time. I thought I had accomplished something wonderful. My dad was with me, of course, to see that I got out of the way when it started to fall.

My next major job was driving an ox team. I started in the spring of when I was eight years old, and I drove an ox team all spring for ploughing, for to put the crop in. My dad was handling the plough end, and I was leading them, kind of alongside. You had a pair of what you called bull rings in their noses with a rope. With that in the nose they'd turn easily. Oxen were slow, of course, and quite stubborn. If they didn't come along, you had a stick, and you'd tap them on the back to make them move along a little faster. A properly broke team of oxen will respond to words very similar to a team of horse, though not as good—at least, I haven't found so. [WM]

You had to pack water, lifting it out with a rope and a pail. You had to have enough wood in for the next day. Kids seven or eight years old milked the cows, and the girls all learned to cook and look after their younger sisters or brothers. And everybody was happy. [DC]

I often marvel at the kids today. They have no chores, no wood to bring in, no work to do at all in present day homes—on the farm, even. The farm is all automation. When I was growing up, every boy was occupied, and so were the girls. And it left you very little time to get in devilment, as the saying is. [JF]

We had to see that the cattle were brought in. About the time I was maybe ten, somewhere around there, I started milking cows. I used to like milking cows. I got so as I was beginning to be the milking machine, so the other fellows backed out. We had wood to get in, and we learned to cut that pretty early, too, with an axe or a framing saw, one that wasn't too big. I've often thought, by golly, a person was nearly born with an axe in their hand.

Well, it was a necessity. It was something you did, because you had to survive: and that seemed to be the object, more than anything else. Getting the wood was part of the business. [AD]

We burnt lots of wood in those days. We used to cut it in the winter, when there was snow on the ground. We'd fall a bunch of trees out in the woods, haul them home and cut them right at the shed. We'd pile a year's wood in at a time. That was a little chore that was done every winter. It was like haying in the summer. We always helped in the hay field in the holidays when we were home from school. I remember we went out with a hand rake, and how I detested every minute of it. That was before I was even old enough to milk cows. We'd get out of it if we could, you know, but, of course, when we got older, if something had to be done, we did it.

There was fruit to pick; we had a good orchard. And there was apples to pick in the fall—always something to do, when they could get us to do it. We accepted that as a way of life. Like in my case, on Saturday the chicken house had to be cleaned out, and we had lots of chickens, so there was lots of work there. But we'd generally get through it by noon, and we could go fishing, or something like that. My parents weren't bad that way. We didn't have to work every minute. We'd get certain jobs done and the rest of the day was ours. [WG]

STORES AND PEDLARS

We went to New Westminster about once a week for mail, and most of our supplies—groceries and such—were bought there. Many's the trip I've made from our corner—just walk the eight miles in, and carry whatever I had to buy back again. We had to go across in the little steam ferry that ran from South Westminster. [RW]

Going to town could be quite an adventure for a youngster, and those who lived near the river had the added excitement of going by rowboat or by river steamer. But those who lived down near the border, what with the floodlands that had to be crossed and the generally muddy trails, tended to get their supplies from across the line.

The Semiahmoo spit is a little point that runs out into the bay, and there was a store on it. That was the only store between here and Westminster; so that's where we had to get our groceries. It was on the American side, but you didn't know anything about a boundary line at that time.

It was a four or five mile trip. And just about the middle of where Blaine is now, there was a man who used to take anybody over to the spit to get their groceries. His name was Dick Richards, but everyone called him Dicky Dick. He always wore hip boots, and he'd bring his boat up close as he could to the shore. There was no landing of any kind. If a man wanted to go over and didn't have hip boots on, he just took his boots and socks off and waded.

It was a real occasion to go that far from home. Father would sometimes take the team of oxen and get quite a load of things. Often he just walked down himself, and carried a sack of flour home on his back. It was a four or five mile trip.

At first there was no customs officer or anything, and people just went back and forth. But when Blaine started to boom—and it sure boomed: canneries and lumber mills and everything—it was time there was a customs officer. So Mr. Chantrell was appointed on this side of the line to see that people didn't do too much smuggling.

There were three roads into Blaine at that time, so he had to watch them all. And when we used to drive down and get anything, we'd always be on the look out for him. And if we saw him, we'd say, "Oh, we were just looking for you."

And he'd say, "What have you got?"

So we'd tell him. And there were some things there was no duty on, and some things there was; and so he'd say, well, that's duty so much; and you'd pay it. He'd put the money in his pocket, and on you'd drive. But if you didn't happen to meet him, it was all the same.

People didn't seem to do much smuggling at night. They seemed to be kind of honourable. But we had an old minister who was a free-trader. I remember Mr. Chantrell telling Father, "That man Stayte, is a terrible man. He'll neither pay duty nor report. He says, 'I'm a free-trader.' And I don't know what to do with him." He hated to be mean, you see. [MS]

The Hudson's Bay Company, of course, had long kept a store at Fort Langley, and by the 1870s there were stores both at Miller's Landing and at Chilliwack Landing serving the people at the upper end of the valley. During the next decade or so stores appeared at other landings (Mt. Lehman, Wade's, Dewdney), on the Mission flats, and along the wagon roads that crossed the wooded interior. On the Yale Road there were stores at Murray's Corners (Murrayville), Shortreed's Corners (Aldergrove) and Abbotsford.

Down the Coast Meridian at Surrey Centre there was a little store, post office and blacksmith shop on the side of the hill below the English church. It was run by an old fellow by the name of Abraham Huck, and when he died a nearby farmer kept a little store of sorts in his house up at the crossroads. This was the place that

John Churchland bought in 1890, and on which he built as an addition—"a quaint little old-fashioned general store. When you opened the door to go in, there was a tinkling of the bell at the top." [RW]

Jack Churchland gives us a child's eye view of his father's enterprise.

The new store was on the south-east corner of the intersection. It was a frame building covered with siding. It had two bedrooms above and a large recreation room. The store windows were made of panes of glass, perhaps 24 inches square. The store was open from the time we got up in the morning till we went to bed at night. If he was home, Dad looked after it. If he wasn't, Mother took a hand. When I got to be ten or twelve I looked after the horses in the barn—fed them and cleaned them. Dad always milked the cows.

In the earlier days there was no other store between New Westminster and Blaine. Later on, Cloverdale developed into something of a place, and one or two stores were started up down there. But country storekeeping in those early days was very much a matter of barter. Folks would bring in eggs, sometimes of doubtful age, butter, or anything they might want to market, and take out groceries, or whatever you had, because it was very much a general store. We kept print goods for ladies' dresses, and shoes and patent medicines and groceries and almost anything you can think of.

Dad had a democrat wagon and a team, and he'd drive into town about once a week. He'd get his groceries largely from the old firm of George Adams, a name well-known in New Westminster, amongst old-timers at least. But later on he started dealing with Todd's in Victoria. That became possible when the railroad was built down the valley of the Serpentine and across Delta to Port Guichon, where it had connection with the freight from Victoria. It was called The Muskeg Limited, and it saved him hauling his stuff from New Westminster. However, I think he continued dealing with some of the New Westminster and Vancouver supply houses, because he'd have such a vast variety of stuff to pick up; and there was always the question of getting something that we didn't ordinarily stock for somebody that wanted it. The mail came out on the train to Cloverdale, and we had a local carrier that carried the mail bags from Cloverdale to Surrey Centre, and down to Elgin.

Operating a store out there was not a very profitable business, and Dad had to look around for other ways of earning a little more money. He was postmaster, municipal assessor, justice of the peace and fisheries guardian. He was not in any way suited to farming, although he did take up some farming after we were there some years. Mother wasn't here long before she wished she was back in England, but I think my father became reconciled to it. Well—he was stuck with it. [JC]

* * *

No one made much money keeping store in pioneer days. Their customers were too few and far between; neither did the pedlar, one would think, driving their carts along the muddy trails. But the youngsters seem to have found them colourful.

That was a big day when the pedlar would come. They'd stay at our home for a week; that was their headquarters. Then they'd go around to all those places. We kids all thought they were wonderful. They'd have thread and pins and needles—just little things like that. [WR]

There were two men, known as Kidd and Israel, who used to go out the Yale Road—I'm not sure whether it was once a week or once a month. But they came through regularly with a team of horses and a covered wagon, loaded with everything from groceries to tin ware. And they had a horn, made out of cow's horn, which they would blow, coming down the road, before they came to a farmer's homestead. Just one note, just like the moo of a cow, you might say, to announce that they were coming.

"Kidd and Israel are coming! There's their horn."

Then we'd go out and buy whatever we needed from their stock. [RW]

It wasn't very often that the pedlar would get this far. It wasn't so very easy. But an agent came around here interesting the folks in sewing machines. I know that my dad bought one off him. It was what they called a New Raymond sewing machine. I think there was 60 dollars paid for it. I guess it was a pretty good machine in its day. [WM]

The first modern range that we ever had was bought from two pedlars who went through the country with four mules and several of these Home Comfort ranges, as I recall, on a flat deck wagon. My dad bought a range from these fellows one day. It was set up and we enjoyed it very much. The oven door pulled down flat and made more or less a shelf, which we kids used to take turns sitting upon to get warm. That was the home comfort. [RW]

There was a fellow by the name of Prefontaine. He had a big bay horse and a covered wagon; he had mostly clothing, shirts and ties and spools. He'd travel all through the country. Then he quit that and built a wee little store at Langley Prairie—the first store that was ever there.

Then in later years—around 50 years ago—a big stout woman used to come around here with a pack on her back, all the way from town. She'd have spools, handkerchiefs, embroidery, and fancy work like that from the old country. [DC]

There was a man used to come, had a big four-wheeled wagon and a store right on the wagon—a great big box with a nailed on roof. And he had four horses pulling it. He had a horn that he used to blow, and you could hear that all over the valley. It sounded like a hunter's horn—just one note. It might have been a cow's horn, for all that I can tell you. It blew loud and long. And the women from around and about there would come out to the road—they knew what day he would be along, and some of them would be out there waiting. Then they would go to it.

You know, the ladies in those days didn't go into an apparel shop and buy a new dress, a new hat or a bunch of new clothes, they nearly all made them. I don't know where they found the time. They would buy cloth, needles or thread. All the equipment needed for sewing and that kind of stuff was bought off this travelling store. I don't remember whether he had anything in the line of groceries. But he did have all sorts of clothing for women and children mostly, and I suppose he had overalls for men and that kind of thing. And he knew where everything was. You asked for certain things, or he wanted to show you something, he knew where to pick 'em out. I've seen him standing there for a long time, us kids were standing there watching. We thought it was quite a stunt to see this man with this here moving store. [AD]

School Days

There was no school here at all in the early days. We were taught at home. That was always an evening job after the work was over. There was no time for anything like that in the daytime. I was about 12 years old before I got to school. [WM]

In colonial times there were schools at New Westminster and Fort Langley, and a special school for Indian children at St. Mary's Mission. When British Columbia became a province it became possible to establish local schools anywhere, as long as there were no less than eight potential pupils. A group of settlers would call a meeting, elect three school trustees, who would then get the approval of the government in Victoria. The latter paid the teacher's salary, while the board provided the building and the equipment.

The people of Chilliwack were the first to take advantage of the new regulations, but Langley people can not have been far behind, as there was a school at Innes Corners (Langley Prairie) by 1870.

During the next two decades, a time of increasing immigration, schools were started all through the valley. The first school in Surrey opened its doors in 1882 in Clover Valley (Cloverdale). Only three people had turned up to the meeting they had called to get things under way. But nothing daunted, they had elected themselves as the trustees, and held their first formal meeting sitting on the side of the road. Their next move was to convert a deserted shack into a school house and construct benches and desks. And in some such way as this, all through the valley, the children of the forest were corralled and tamed.

To get us to school a few ranchers got together and cut a trail more or less in a straight line, kitty-corner through the bush, to Tynehead. There was heavy timber, mud and water, but whatever you came to you had to go through it. [RW]

We used to walk two miles along the railroad track, and Mother used to worry about us. There was a train going behind us when we were going to school, and the Seattle train was behind us when we were coming home. I told here she did't need to worry. I got off the track, and I even jumped the ditch and got over to the wire fence, when the train was coming. The engineer used to wave to me, and try to reassure me. But I was afraid of the old train. [MB]

We went to the Surrey Centre school. It was between three and three and a half miles away. And in the winter there was no drainage on that flat country, so as soon as the rain came along in the fall, the land was flooded. A little extra rain or a little snowfall, and it was over the road. When we got down to the edge of the water, which was anything from an inch deep up to about a foot, we took off our shoes and stockings, rolled up our pants' legs high enough, and waded through for a mile. In the wintertime, of course, the water was real cold. When we got to the other side, we put our shoes and stockings on, and beat it along the rest of the way to school. Today, they wouldn't let their children begin to do what we did, and yet I don't think it hurt any of us. I don't think any of us ever caught cold that I know of—what I call a real cold. [AD]

When there was deep snow Dad would hitch up the oxen, and we'd have a sleigh ride to school. [WR]

The one-room school that I attended first was a good two miles, maybe more, over a very boggy, rough road. The East Chilliwack land is very boggy, and, of course, there was no drainage at that time. That would be about 1896. If we walked, very often we got our feet wet, and Mother didn't like us sitting all day in school with wet feet. So Father said, "Well, let them ride old Nellie."

It seemed that every farmer in the valley at that time had an old mare called old Nellie. Old Nellie was old and a tiny bit lame, but she was safe, and at least two of us—three if necessary—would ride her to school, bareback. I don't think our legs were long enough to go down to the stirrups. In places the roadway was deep in mud and water. Other places would have been impassable had it not been for the corduroy, the cedar rails that was laid across; and old Nellie would pick her way around and over these rails and get us safely to school.

One day my sister Ernestine and I were both astride old Nellie. She was in front of me holding the reins, and my arms were tight around her waist. A chap on another white horse came galloping along, and old Nellie, who was a little bit deaf, I think, saw this white horse looming up, out of the corner of her eye, and she was frightened. She made a plunge, and with that I went over the rump and pulled my sister with me. I landed in a great big deep mud hole, my sister on my lap, and she storming at me because I had pulled her off and into the mud hole; and here I was only hanging on. So anyway, this chap—he couldn't get his horse stopped for a little while—he came back and helped us back on to the horse, and gave my sister the reins again, and we got to school all right. But we had to stand over the pot-bellied stove in the middle of the room with our backs to the stove to get dried out a little bit before we could sit down and tackle our work. [NP]

It was quite a common thing for youngsters to ride horses. The parents built a shed there at the school, and everybody had their stall that they put their horse in. The horses weren't at large on the playground.

School was about two miles from here, and we had a little buckskin pony, and first of all my two older sisters rode him. If you fell off, he'd stop and wait till you got on. It might take you half an hour; you had to wait till you got to a fence or a log, or whatever else it was. There were quite a lot of bear in the country at that time. You would see a bear pretty near any time you wanted to; but horses don't like bears. They can smell them, I don't know how far off. Many a time he'd start down the road, and within half a mile he'd just turn around and come home; you couldn't do anything about it. He'd seen a bear. If the wind was the other way and you happened to get by the bear before the bear showed himself, or he got a sniff of it, he'd go the other way.

When my other sister started to school, the three of them used to ride one horse. I was the youngest and the last to go, but I think the four of us only rode one week—four on one horse. Then Father got a cart. [CB]

In cold weather, this old horse, Nellie, would come out of the shed where we tied our horses, and be hungry and very cold, just standing there all day. We'd climb up on this platform and pull the reins to get her up close, then jump on her back. And I remember one day she was so anxious to get going, she was sort of jumping around and getting away from the platform; we were having quite a time. But finally the two of us made a landing and got seated. Just then a little boy about 12 pulled a frozen crust of bread from his lunch bucket, and threw it. It hit her on the jaw just under the mouth, where it was very tender. And with that she reared right up on her hind legs and cut capers for a while. However, we were able to stick on. And when she got going with her nose towards home, we sure had a fast ride. All she wanted was to get back into the stable, into a warm place, and get some oats. [NP]

* * *

The first school house was made of logs, but I never went into it. I went to the next one, which was made of lumber. [WR]

Our school was small. I imagine it would have held 18 to 20, and then it would have been filled right up. Of course, it never was. Sometimes it was as low as eight or nine; so kids didn't play hooky very much. If they had, they would have had to close down the school. In fact, in order to keep going, I had to start when I was five years old. They were going to close it down. [WG]

We got the school (at Hall's Prairie) started in the spring of 1894. It was a nice little building. It had windows all round. They didn't put them all in one side then. There was a platform outside, then an entrance hall. The girls went in one door and the boys went in the other. The teacher was up on this platform, and there were blackboards around the wall, except where several big maps hung. The boys sat on one side and the girls on the other. [MS]

There was a cast iron heater in the middle of the room, and the wood was out the back. Teacher would tell somebody to go out and get an armful. [WG]

We didn't use a lot of paper the way they do nowadays. We had slates and cloths and a bottle of water to wash your slates. But they began to think that wasn't sanitary enough, so they cut out the slates altogether. You had a copy book with the starting of the writing. Then you filled out down the rest of the sheet, you see. There were certain days for writing, and the better your writing the more points you got. Same with arithmetic.

We had seats and desks, good seats and desks. Back on Prince Edward Island, when I first went to school, we used to have a piece of a plank, legs up through them, you know, and you'd bunt against those things sliding along the seat. You see, back there the people paid the teachers, paid everything. The government wasn't paying anything. The teacher that I went to had over a hundred pupils in his school. Because he couldn't teach all the pupils, he'd get some of his higher pupils to take a class—learn them their ABC and so on. [IB]

I never remember sitting on a bench. I think we had desks with proper seats, and a place under the desk, a shelf, where we put our books and our little bottle of water for wetting the slate rag; and if we didn't have any water we would just use spit—spit on the slate cloth. And they would get horribly black and dirty; but we'd still use them to wipe off our slates to do something else. We had big slates and small slates—smaller slates for the little people. And how the teachers ever taught so many classes in one room—a lot of it oral lessons, the younger classes especially—I'll never know. And the noise of the scratching on these slates! There would be a bit of hard something in that pencil and sometimes it would screech in a high pitch. But the teacher would go on teaching; everything was all right, though sometimes we'd get called down for it. Nowadays, scribblers with lead pencils are so quiet you don't hear anything.

One of my most bitter experiences at school in the ABC class was having to go over and over making A's which had been printed on the blackboard. And it wasn't because I didn't know how to make an A. It was because the teacher didn't come around and give us anything different right then. [NP]

An ongoing problem for the school trustees was to find teachers who were at least adequate, and willing to endure the primitive conditions and the loneliness. Few, in the very earliest days, had any qualifications.

I remember our first teacher. He was quite a good teacher and took pride in his scholars, and we took pride in him. We used to gather wild strawberries, and give him a bunch at noon.

I was only eight years old and there were 16 of us, from ABC's up to the fifth grade. My oldest brother went there until my father broke his leg. He was 19, and there were other boys pretty near as old. [MS]

I think I was about 12 years old when we got the school built, and I went to school for the first two years. Then they kept me home to work on the roads, and I went to school in the winter time. But I got so far behind I couldn't get anywhere. I went two winters and then I quit altogether. [IB]

You'd get boys around 16 and 17. They would go to school in the winter; and, I tell you, the teacher had something to handle when they got there. They maybe were stronger than he was. The first teacher I had was one of those who believed in not sparing the rod. He used to have a pointer and he'd fling it at some boy or girl that didn't have their lessons

done—and whack-whack-whack! Of course, he wouldn't be allowed to do a thing like that nowadays. He used to go down to the river for his lunch at noon, and one day these bigger boys—I don't know what got into them that day: just over-exuberance or something—but there was a tin heater that had been put out into the hall—I guess it must have been May or June—and they took it out and played football with it; so there wasn't much left of it when the teacher came back. There were all sorts of things like that. I can remember that time he lined up all those big boys across the school room and started with his cane—this pointer. He didn't whack their hands. He tried to whack them around their legs; and one of them had those long leather boots they used to wear in those days. He kept whacking away and the boy kept laughing away, and he wore himself out. Finally he threw the pointer way down to the end of the room.

He didn't have an easy time, and neither did the kids. But judging by the children nowadays, I don't think they were as guilty of cheekiness—really being cheeky, you know.

The next teacher we had was an M.A. from Dublin, Ireland, and he was just the opposite. He was a big fat man, and easy going. He was a great man for "soms". If you ever got through your work, "Well, now, get on with your soms. Get on with your soms." He was there two years, but he took to drink, and he quit. And then we had a woman teacher. [BP]

Our teachers were very nice. We always cried when they left. I think they got $50 a month, and they didn't pay much for board. They'd go through for doctors. And Mr. McLean, he was one of our teachers. He was from Prince Edward Island, and was Minister of Education here in the 1930's. [WR]

I really belonged in Lochiel school, but the trail wasn't open. So I went to Otter school. It was a one-room school. It had a big box stove in the middle, and the pipes went way back. The kids were fully as hard to control as they are today. There was a teacher there and he had two boys, and one of them was a pretty bad boy. I remember one day—I was just a little kid, seven years old—the father and the son started to fight. They upset the stove pipes, and all us kids were crying; and they fought it out right there, the father and son.

Then when I was about eight they opened the trail to Lochiel school and I started going to that. But Otter was a tough school them days. The next teacher that came, some of us kids had no use for him. He was over 70, you know. If you did something wrong, he would tell you to go to the anteroom, and maybe leave you there for half an hour. And then he'd come out and take your head and put it between his legs and give it to you. The kids got down on him, and they put four or five sticks of powder and a fuse under the school, right under his desk. At noon hour they lit it, but they had no cap on it, otherwise it would have blown the whole thing to pieces.

At Otter after that, they got a little girl in to teach. She didn't weigh a hundred pounds, and the people all said, "Oh, well!"

Inside a month you could hear a pin drop. Everything was lovely.

There were only twenty teachers in the whole municipality. An awful lot of them were town girls, and they fitted in awful good in the country. They knew all the parents, and boarded at one of the parents' houses. And they used to take a lead in everything, them days. They never got home weekends; and if the community wanted a play, they put on a play—or the Ladies' Aid, they'd join in with them. [DC]

As a matter of fact, my mother came out as a teacher, and taught as the first teacher in this school. And I guess that's where she met my dad. [CB]

* * *

And here, for a change, is a teacher's point-of-view.

I applied for the school at Milner and got it in November, 1912. It was a one-roomed school, and I believe it had been rather unruly. One day the chairman of the school board called on me, and he told me that one of the teachers had become so annoyed, she had taken the slate—they used slates just before I came—and smashed it over the youngster's head, then told him to go home with the frame around his neck. He rather admired her for her spirit. But some of the parents didn't like it quite so well. They told me that the lady that had

gone just before I arrived was a large woman and a fairly good disciplinarian, but she simply couldn't stand those youngsters, and had refused to stay any longer. When I arrived, they gave me until Christmas to be finished off. But I thought, well, I'm not going to be driven out by a little group of youngsters, no matter how unruly they seem to be. They tried out everything on me, including one trick that I didn't know they had done at all. They put bricks down the chimney in order to get the room to become so smoky that we'd have to dismiss school. And I was so innocent of what they'd done that I felt badly that this had happened and sent the big boys up to take down the pipes and clean them out; and we did everything we could to stop the smoking, but we couldn't, of course. Well, they decided this was no good. So one of them crawled up and took the bricks out, and I didn't know a thing about it until long afterwards. So you know what a crew they were to cope with. However, after a time I succeeded. I gave one boy a jolly good strapping—I took one of the big ones—and that settled them all.

It was rather a large school—44 children. They had all the grades from grade one to the entrance class, and at that time they were writing the government examinations, which meant a great deal of work for the senior class. They had thirteen written examinations to take and they had to pass their exams with a good standing or they weren't allowed into high school. And by the way, we had no high school in the place at that time; they had to go either to Westminster or Vancouver, in order to attend high school.

In a one-roomed school you had to group classes together; and, actually, it's a very unsatisfactory way to teach them. In those days, you must remember we didn't have the things to work with they have these days, either; no coloured papers, no coloured chalk, nothing like that, that would make life attractive.

The inside of that school house was just about as unattractive as anything you could possibly imagine. The floor was more or less rough, no attempt at paint, and the walls were a sort of drab grey with shiny black blackboards, one at the front, one at the side. The windows were high, so that the light didn't get down to the desks too well. We didn't have electric light. Our water supply consisted of a bucket with the old tin cup. And one of the children had to carry it from the neighbouring blacksmith's shop every morning; that was his little job. There was an old stove in the middle of the room with the long pipes that had challenged these youngsters. At the front of the room there was a platform, and on that stood a table with just one little drawer in it—that was your teacher's desk—one chair and a tiny cupboard for supplies.

And the supplies consisted of a box of chalk and some blackboard erasers. That's what you started to work with. However, you tried to make things as interesting as you could, and the children seemed to respond, and we got along very nicely after I settled them, once and for all, with the big boy getting it. They decided, well, that person, she's pretty little but she means business; so they settled down. And the girls were very co-operative. I enjoyed life with them, very much.

That lasted just a year. And then we moved down into a very nice new school house, two rooms and very attractive. The rooms were bright and the windows lower. The blackboards now were green. And the whole place had an air of refinement that made you quite happy to be in it. It was very modern, and had a basement with running water and toilets with basins, just as the boys and girls have today. And we had a furnace. In a very short time we got an assistant, and then it was much easier. The little ones moved into the other room. They were happier and so was I. [JM]

SUNDAYS

In Victorian times it was generally understood that the 'Lord's Day' was not to be defiled by work, beyond what was absolutely necessary. In British Columbia as in most other parts of Canada, this was also the law.

It's not recorded that the Lord said anything about not playing too, on the Sabbath, but the Scottish Presbyterians, whose influence was strong in the valley, had not doubt that He did. Which was hard on a child's natural high spirits.

Nevertheless, there were compensations. When the roads were passable, everyone got dressed in their best, piled into the wagon, and drove off to the little church or the schoolhouse for Sunday service and Sunday school. The grown-ups sang with gusto, pronounced an earnest 'amen' whenever it was required, and listened intently to the sermon, be it inspirational or merely thought provoking. Their children learned to be patient with it all, and not to wriggle.

Afterwards they shared news and gossip with the other families – and bachelors, too – who had come from miles around. For whatever else it was, Sunday was a day of community for young and old alike – a civilising day, nurturing their instinct for order, progress and morality in a rather uncouth environment.

You went to church on Sunday. That was the thing to do in a lot of families. Church and school were part of the community life. When we came here first there was a Presbyterian minister every two weeks. Then after a year or two the Anglican minister came, and they would have it in the school on alternate Sundays, you see. And there was always a Sunday school. As far as that went, they were far more religious in a way than what they are now. [BP]

An awful lot of people came from Ontario and Prince Edward Island, and there was quite a bunch from the old country. They were all good church people. Sometimes it would be the English preacher and sometimes it would be the Methodist, sometimes it would be the Presbyterian. But it didn't matter; everybody went. [DC]

Ministers and priests had to be great travellers. When the Reverend Alexander Dunn came out from Scotland in 1875 on behalf of the Presbyterian Church, his duties covered both sides of the Fraser River as far as Yale. He lived for a time at Innes Corners on the Yale Road, and one weekend he might have to ride to upper Sumas to preach, and the next to Ladner. Being a minister those days was a healthy outdoor occupation. The Anglican minister, the Reverend William Bell, was a great walker.

He'd never think anything of topping off 10 miles for a little stroll. And he walked everywhere, nearly always. He did have a horse, but it was hard to park the horse sometimes. He'd walk and stay two or three days with the neighbours, and didn't have a horse to worry about. [GR]

He was instrumental in the building of Christ Church, Surrey Centre, the first church in Surrey. Next year a church was built at Mud Bay on the understanding that it be available to any denomination. And not long after that the Methodists had a church at Clover Valley.

Catholics, wherever they were, would be under the wing of the priests at New Westminster or St. Mary's Mission. But the great majority of the people of Langley and Surrey appear to have been Protestants, and Bell and Dunn between them accounted for most of the baptisms, weddings and burials.

Dr. Dunn used to go on horseback for miles and miles to the schools. And he christened us all, and married us all. I remember the day I was christened. There were 12 of us and the neighbour's kids, and we were quite big. There was quite a christening. [WR]

My father was an elder in the church of the Reverend Alexander Dunn. He had a church over at what was called Murray's Corners. I guess it's Murrayville now. My father used to walk over there on a Sunday and back, and my mother went a few times, too; that would be 12 miles each way (from Halls Prairie). Then Reverend Dunn used to come and preach once in a while at our house. Soon as they got the school up, in '85, we had services there. [MS]

We had Lutherans and Anglicans and Presbyterians and Baptists, and they would all turn out. Even the old bachelors used to come to the service. You see, there wasn't very much going on, and it didn't make very much difference who was doing the preaching. We had all kinds, from Reverend William Bell, the Anglican, to a real fiery, hot Primitive Methodist from Blaine. One preacher we had — I guess I won't mention his name — he said there was no salvation outside of his church. The next Sunday he came, there wasn't a soul there. [MS]

On Sunday, of course, we had Sunday school. We had to go when we were all quite young. My father saw to that. And we had to remain for church — an extra hour to what the others did, all dressed up in your Sunday best, and your shoes polished, that sort of thing. [WG]

We had to go to Sunday school whether we thought it was nice or not, and learn a whole lot of verses and sing them off, and then the next day forget them all. So I thought I'd commercialize the thing. I had to go to the Presbyterian. My father was superintendent. They had theirs in the morning, but the Methodists had theirs in the afternoon. I thought, "Heavens' there's a picnic here. I can get two presents at Christmastime, instead of one. I'll go to the Presbyterian in the morning and I'll go to the Methodists in the afternoon, and I will make something out of this." So I did. I worked hard. And it came Christmastime and they had their Christmas tree and all that there. But the Methodists changed their mind. Each child was supposed to bring something for some very poor people that had nothing at all, to make them happy. "It's more blessed to give than to receive," they said. Well, I couldn't see it that way at all. So that settled them.

Then the Presbyterians had theirs, and I got up and sang a song and recited something, and was in a little play that they had, and I worked my head off pretty near. I thought, "Well, I'll surely get something here, anyway. This is the last chance." And, my golly! my Sunday school teacher got me a nice rubber ball, and a good sized one, something worth while, and she put that on the tree. And I'm blessed if somebody didn't get in there and steal this rubber ball off the tree, and it was gone.

Oh, I was broken hearted. She come down the next day with a little celluloid thing with red and white stripes on it, that was only good to look at. You couldn't play baseball with that. So that just settled me for Sunday school forever. I wouldn't go to either of them. I never went to any church for over 20 years. I was busy working on the farm and I had no time. [JK]

Of course, there was a lot that didn't have any religious training. I never had any training in Sunday School. When I was a boy, probably about ten or twelve years old, I liked fishing. And one Sunday morning another young chap and I got our rods — the crude fishing rods we had cut in the bush — and went to a big beaver dam and fished there. I don't know whether we got any fish or not, but on the way home we were overtaken by the Presbyterian minister, and we got a severe reprimand. "Don't you know, boys, it's wicked to go fishing on Sunday? Don't you know that's wicked?" And we felt like crawling into a hole.

I used to go out shooting on Sunday at Matsqui. But what did I know. I didn't have any religious training. It was a day of relaxation from the farm. [AH]

It just depended which family you belonged to. Ours was, "No fishing or hunting or anything like that on Sunday." My father was very strict about that.

We used to go down to the old railroad track and play and run around. There was an old vacant house down there. And in the winter time we went out and slid, no skates. He didn't seem to worry about that. He used to like to take his book and go to bed on Sunday afternoon. I don't think he worried too much about us, unless he knew we were fishing, or something like that. [WG]

I was like any other kid in the country; I liked doing things I wasn't supposed to do. I was a good boy Sunday morning, but as sure as I got a chance I would slip down to the river and go fishing in the afternoon. I would go down and sit on the bridge, and Reverend William Bell would come by. He'd be coming from Tynehead or Port Kells. And if I was sitting ear the edge of that bridge where he could reach me, he would swipe at me with the buggy whip for fishing on Sunday. "You shouldn't do that," he'd tell me all the time, and I guess he meant it.

Every so often we would have another minister come and take his place for a few Sundays, give him a holiday. And one Sunday my brother and I got a canoe we had, and paddled off down the river, and this canoe would hardly make a sound. We paddled down to what they called Boxall's Landing. Boxall's Landing was one of the places where they hauled logs right to the river and dumped them in. We come slipping around the corner and there was the minister fishing — on Sunday afternoon. Of course, we had to get after him. "What's the matter with you, getting after us fishing, and here you are fishing?" The only thing he could say — I guess I would have to say it myself, if I wanted to get out of it — was, "Don't do as I do. Do as I tell you." [AD]

NEIGHBOURS

Everybody was in the same boat them days; nobody had anything. And everybody was a lot happier than in our day, I think. They'd go visiting maybe five or six miles on a Saturday, stay all night and come home Sunday. Everybody knew everybody. [DC]

Children grew up , not only belonging to their own closely knit family, but feeling they were part of the larger community—the other children and adults down the road, or beyond the woods.

They were all great neighbours. In those days you were never alone. Your joys and sorrows, they were there to share them with you. [BP]

Our house burned down. In those days there were no brick chimneys. It was just a tin stove pipe through the roof. And one February, on a real cold night with snow on the ground, we woke up to hear that the house was on fire. We were all small kids, and we were bundled out of the house as fast as we could get out, with whatever we could get in the line of clothes. Half an hour afterwards there was nothing left of the house but smouldering ruins.

There was five of us kids, and we were parked out with neighbours around the country. But in those days everybody helped everybody. The settlers around moved in, and within six weeks we had a new house standing, right where the old one had stood. [RW]

Mother was like a nurse in the community. Anybody sick, Mother would be there looking after them. If she couldn't stay away from home, they'd bring them back and she'd look after them. I remember there was a Mr. Morrison. He was at our place all winter. I remember he had an awful cough. I guess he had consumption, but they didn't know then. And Mother never thought of it. She didn't get five cents out of it. All the babies that came, Mother was there. And anybody passed away, she was there. She herself had 11 children. Three died young. Never had a doctor. [WR]

Women just helped each other. I heard Mother tell when her twin sons were born in Iowa. They weren't expecting them quite so soon.. Father had gone to the store for groceries, so there wasn't a soul around but the three children. The oldest was only five; you couldn't send him anywhere. But she managed all right. She said it was in the middle of summer, and she just put the three little things outside and fastened the door on them, and she had her two babies all fixed up when father got home. [MS]

I don't know how many children Mother helped into the world. But you take any sickness, the closest doctor was the one at Mission or the one down at New Westminster. And there was only horse and buggy or the boats to get to either place.

Old Pat Heafey up here, he got gored with a bull, and he was badly gored. I guess he would have been killed if it hadn't been for his dog—his "dang coyote dog" as he always called him. Well, he just staggered over to the neighbour and she fixed him up as well as she could; and then she sent down for my mother. And they just used white cotton rags they'd have on hand. Every white cotton rag was saved just for emergencies like that. Then he went home and stayed home; and they looked after him and attended his wounds. They just took that in their stride. But nowadays he'd be in hospital.

Mother wasn't a nurse, but she was gifted that way. She'd go out and stay, sometimes a week, with a sick person. On the farms those days there was always somebody home. When the children came home from school, the men would be there, anyhow.

When they were building the barn my brother Edward broke his leg. They had to get a doctor from Mission. I think he caught a freight train down, then a friend went over the river and brought him across and we met him and brought the doctor up to our place. Then when they got this all set, we took him back and this friend took him across the river. And if I

remember right, he had some sort of arrangement with the CPR that there would be a hand car any time he wanted it, that would come in and get him.

And there was a neighbour a good three miles away. And when he heard about it he shot a pheasant and brought it down to my brother, and then he walked back the three miles again. That would be six miles in one afternoon. But that was the way they did it. You were never alone, you know. [BP]

My mother tells a story about the early days before my time. Got a real cold snap that winter, quite a bit of snow. And the river was frozen over solid, like it used to do in those days. Seems to me in those days we got cold snaps that would last three to six or seven weeks sometimes. It was in one of those. And either my mother was taken sick, or my oldest brother, I'm not sure which. But my father had to get to town to get some medicine, and of course he had to walk. The river was frozen, but he didn't walk down the ice; he walked on the road or the railroad track.

I forgot to mention that he had a neighbour with him. In those days if you were going to take a trip like that, with any danger attached to it, the neighbour would just drop what he was doing and go along with you. And this man Macdonald went along with my dad. And when they got down to the ferry slip, of course, everything was tied up. The river was frozen, but the cold snap was beginning to break up, and they advised them not to try to go across on the ice, because it had been cracking and showing signs of going out. But they had to get this medicine, so they started out and got about halfway across when the ice started really to crack. They were as close to the other side as they were to the side they had left, so they made a run for it. And before they got over to the other side it was breaking up, and they were jumping from block to block of ice. They got as far as a row of piling on the Westminster side of the river, and hung on there until a man came out in a rowboat and picked them up—dodged through the ice and took them off. They came back in a rowboat, so that's how close it was. [WG]

* * *

There weren't many people here, you know, so you really appreciated everybody that was here. You didn't pick and choose too much about who your companions were. There were half-breeds and there were Indians, but they were just about the same as us, you see what I mean. There was none of that inferiority complex or superiority complex here. They were just neighbours. (BP)

> *And a neighbour in those days lived at least half a mile away on the next pre-emption, often considerably more, which is why the youngsters, as Bert Williams remembered, slept at each others' houses from time to time. Moreover, isolation was just what some of them wanted, especially the old bachelors, of whom there were quite a number. It gave them the freedom to be themselves and live as they liked, within the limits of their poverty. As someone once remarked, looking back with candour at the kind of people they grew up among, 'They were all characters. I guess we were, too.'* [MB]

This Pat Heafey, now, he was a wild Irishman. He had a few head of stock and this bit of a farm, and he raised his own potatoes. He came out with the CPR, worked his way out. And he was a hard-swearing, hard-working man with a heart of gold. And temper! He'd just blow up like a firecracker over nothing, you know. But, my goodness, he was a good neighbour.

Every Sunday evening, Pat Heafey would come down to our log house, and we used to look for his visits, because even if he was telling you the everyday happenings, there was always something funny happening to him.

Then just across from where he lived, was another bachelor by the name of Nicoll. He was a kind of a scientist, but very hard to get on with. Kids were always scared of him. I don't know why. He was an odd looking man, and he had big teeth. But he had wonderful magnifying glasses, and he'd get my brothers and my sister and I to go up there. And the

things he'd show us, you know, just out of a drop of water. It was really out of this world for those times. But he didn't get on with his neighbours too good. He was an introvert; he just didn't want to be bothered with neighbours. [BP]

Mother used to bake for the bachelors and do their washing. They'd go out in the summer and work in the camps, when the camps started up. Then they'd come back here in the winter. And there were some funny ones. I remember Gus Schroeder—he was a Belgian, I think—and how we used to hate him. We were getting to be young ladies, and he'd come and visit, and sit beside the heater. And probably the night before he'd killed a skunk. Oh, the aromas from that skunk! [WR]

One old fellow, Charlie Francis, had bought five acres of my father's property. He was an old German, round as a barrel, and quite a character. But he was a dear old soul, and the best natured man I ever saw. He had a beard, and our family used to give him a bad time. We'd be climbing all over him and pulling his whiskers.

But one time he got burned out. He was drying some blasting powder beside his heater, and it took fire, and burned his face. So he moved in with my mother, and stayed there for the winter.

It seems that there was always someone in the district that took in these visitors. Mother always had one or two extra ones staying there. There was a Mrs. Knapp, another great old character. She lived with her brother and his wife, and they used to have a fight once in a while. Then she'd walk two miles—she could hardly walk at all, she was so stiff. But I guess when she got angry she could. And she'd come down to my mother's and stay there. She used to make quilts and things. And Mother would save up a lot of stuff. She knew she'd be down about every three months.

She was very hard of hearing, and she'd get into the bedroom and talk away out loud to herself. Our kids used to tease her sometimes, but half the time she wouldn't hear what they said. [MB]

We had a man who lived about a mile away, and when I was quite young we used to sneak around to his place, just to be there about the time he would come in to get his supper. Then we would listen, and, you know, you'd swear there was a woman with him in the house, and they were having the darndest row you ever heard. We knew there was nobody there beside him, but he could really talk like a woman. And we'd listen to this dialogue. He'd bawl her out, and then she'd bawl him out. I don't think he got the best of it any time, but they just kept it up. Then he danced with himself, back and forth. We got a great kick out of that. [AD]

There was an old character used to live up here on Latimer Road, an old Scotchman, a bachelor. His name was McClarty, and I never saw a dirtier man, before or since. He used to get on an old horse and ride around the country; and where he was treated well and given a meal, often he'd come in in the afternoon. Mother used to always give him something to eat.

One day we were left to run the ranch while the folks went to Vancouver—my youngest sister, my two brothers and myself. It poured rain that day and blew, and about seven o'clock at night the dogs started to bark. I went to the door to see what was going on, and as soon as I opened it I heard a voice say, "Hullo-o-o." As soon as I heard that I knew it was McClarty. He had his shotgun with him and a gunny sack with a pack over his shoulder, and he had a top coat on. And if he had been trailed through the river he couldn't have been any wetter. Of course there was nothing doing but to invite him in.

He stood beside the stove and the water run out of his clothes and across the floor, and we were terrified out of our lives, because, being so dirty, we figured he wasn't alone—that he had company. But we couldn't let him stay in his soaked clothes, so we had to go and dig out some old clothes that were out in the shed and warm them up. Then we sent him outside to dress himself. The next job was to get him a bed. We had quite a few horse blankets, so we gathered them up and put him to bed on the floor.

Next morning he was awful sore and tired, and we gave him breakfast. We had hung his clothes up beside the stove in the house where we dried wet clothes, and now they were dry.

So I told him to go out and put them on. But we were on pins and needles; we didn't know what he might have left around. We didn't know much about that kind of company, but we knew such things existed. However, we never saw any signs.

He says to me, he says, "You have to take me home. I can't walk." And you don't know how glad I was of the opportunity. I got the oldest of our horses and put a saddle on him, and about all he could do was climb on. He was badly used up. So I took him home, and we had to go away round by the old Telegraph Trail. It was miles around.

He'd been out hunting, he said, and he'd got lost. That's the story he told. I wondered if he'd been to Langley Fort and got drunk, and had sobered up by the time he got to our place. He'd been using his double-barrelled shotgun for a walking cane, and the muzzle was all bent in. I took a bar and straightened it all out, and pulled the charges out. Sent him home with an empty gun.

One time he was coming up from New Westminster, and he fell off the boat and hurt himself pretty badly. They claim he had been imbibing rather freely, and he was a little bit top heavy. They carried him into the hotel at Langley Fort and put him to bed. But they had to bath him. And they claim that the dirt was dried on so bad they had to chip it off. That's what I heard. They also said, when they got him washed up, he was a pretty good-looking man; in fact, they didn't know him. [WM]

The settlers had the Indian people for neighbours only when they lived near one of the reserves. These were along the Fraser or on the coast, or at least accessible by water. A child who lived in the backwoods would rarely see them, and so they'd be regarded with a good deal of romantic awe. Albert Drinkwater remembered how every summer, for several years, they would travel through the Surrey woods on their way to a big pow-wow or potlatch at Semiahmoo, down on Boundary Bay. When they got near his place,

They'd go down into a ravine and camp, stay overnight and go on again. Us kids used to think that was a wonderful thing, because they came with their families and household goods, and were all dressed in their fancy clothes — the best blankets that they owned, and that kind of thing. There must have been, as near as I can remember, two or three different tribes or villages that went together, because in later years I never saw that many Indians in any one place. [AD]

That would be happening around the middle of the 1890s. But here's a memory from ten years earlier, and when the curiosity is the other way round. The family concerned was living on Hall's Prairie.

The first time I ever saw old Semiahmoo, the old Indian chief, was when he came to my people's place one day. The door was open, and he walked right in. He just yelled "Klahowya!" — that's "how do you do?" — and walked right in. He was a very old man, quite short and broad, and his face was all puckered up. He had a pair of moccasins on, white man's clothes and a Hudson's Bay blanket. And his headdress was a corner of blanket sewn together to make a peak, with a tail hanging down his back.

Father happened to be away that day, so Mother was there by herself, and just a bunch of us little kids. Mother was a bit frightened; but, anyway, he walked right in and sat down and looked around, rested himself for a minute or two. Then he got up and walked all around the house and examined everything, just like a little kid would do, you know. He got his eye on a pair of father's boots, and asked Mother if he could have them. Of course, Mother didn't want to displease him, so she said, "All right," he could have the boots.

He could speak a little bit of English. He said he had two "klootchman" and had a "papoose" — that was the baby, and the klootchman was his wife. Then he went outside and got his eye on a pair of big cow horns, and he asked Mother if he could have them. Mother said "Yes." So then he came in and sat down again. He had a few little stray whiskers on his chin, and he sat there screwing up his face and pullin' them out. And he sat and he sat and he sat — all afternoon — until Mother got nervous. So she went and got a bowl of bread and milk and handed it to him. She says, "You eat this and then klatowa." That's Chinook for "go."

Oh, he was awfully insulted. He set down the bowl of bread and milk and got up. He never took his boots nor his norns or anything, just went off. And he never came back. He was awfully hurt.

But one day, a little while after that, he came to school And the teacher made quite a big fuss over him, sat him up on the platform beside him. And the old man sat there pullin' at his whiskers as usual. And teacher tried to talk to him, and they had quite a little session. He wanted to know where the children slept; that's what worried him. He thought they would sleep right there in the school So teacher explained to him how we all went away home after school was over.

He came several times to the school. But teacher never made so much fuss over him as he did the first time. That was in '86; and he died about three years after that, I think — one cold winter. From what he would tell about seeing different things they figured he lived to be about 125. [MS]

Familiar to almost everyone were the Chinese. Many a settler, when he became sufficiently prosperous, had one living on the farm all year round, to help out with the work. They lived by themselves and took their meals by themselves. It was their own choice. A group of them might contract to clear some land, or put in ditches and dykes. Some of them were small merchants, and when you had a pig to sell, would come around, buy it and carry it away. "Sometimes they'd tie the four feet together and put it on a pole, and away they'd go. It was pretty hard on the pig." [CB]

Nowadays, when so many of our Chinese people are a respected and integrated part of our Canadian society, it comes as something of a shock to learn how differently their forebears were regarded a hundred years ago. These patient, intelligent, hard-working people, finding themselves in an alien land, clung to their ancient ways, and so were objects of fun to a degree that would not be tolerated today. The youngsters were the chief culprits, but they merely reflected the prevalent attitudes of the older people.

The Chinamen would come in, six or eight of them, with a pole over their shoulder and a bundle tied on each end of it. And that's the way they carried their stuff. And they would do their trading, go to these China stores and get what they wanted for the week. Then they'd all march home again. Bicycles were just coming in about that time, and these kids would see this big bunch of Chinamen coming down the road. So they'd ride alongside and get close enough to a Chinaman to catch hold of his pigtail and give it a big pull. And away would go the bundles on the ground, and the Chinaman would start after them, and there was war right away. Everything was in the air in no time. And the kids would ride away and laugh. The delinquency wasn't going on just lately. It's been going on for a while, I'm telling you.

And I never forget us kids, we used to pelt those old Chinamen with snowballs in the first of the winter season. And then we had gall enough to go there and stick out our hands for a handout when they'd have their Chinese New Year, along in February somewhere. We were there after fire crackers and candy. If it had been me I'd have showed us the way to go home. But they didn't. They used to give them to us. I'd beg a bunch of firecrackers and when they wasn't looking I'd grab a handful of candies. We were right in heaven then; we could have our own show. We didn't care about the Chinamen, if they lived or not, after that. [JK]

On a happier note, let us look briefly at the occasions that would bring the neighbours together. Bert Williams has already told us about the fall fair that was held once at Murrays Corners. These fall fairs or agricultural exhibitions were held annually in several municipalities, and grew in size and importance from year to year. We have also heard about the weekly gatherings for church and Sunday school, which were often community affairs.

When people found themselves with a bit more leisure they put on entertainments in the school houses and community halls. And everybody went, children included. A boy or a girl might even be prevailed upon to get up and sing, or play an instrument, or take part in a comic dialogue.

The Christmas season, as always, was a time for getting together, sometimes in the school house for a party or a dinner, but mostly just at home. "Christmas was a great event" for the Dan Nicholsons, whose house was a centre for Prince Edward Islanders. "Neighbours and anybody would come calling from miles around and stay probably for a week—Scotchman's weekend—and bring all the kids. Sometimes we had to sleep crossways. And we'd want to get up in the night but we couldn't because we'd lose our place." [WR]

Everyone celebrated the queen's birthday with picnics and sports, and later in the season groups would take the day off and go to the beach, even if it meant driving from as far away as Tynehead.

The highlight in our lives was a trip from the old homestead to Blackie's Spit, which is now Crescent Beach. Once or twice a year the families of McNair's shingle mill at Tynehead used to load everybody in a wagon and drive down there on a Sunday. Start early in the morning. We'd have a picnic, dig clams, and drive back again. [RW]

In the latter days of the last century people came to White Rock for picnics. Large table cloths would be spread, and we would sit around and have delicious lunches prepared by the ladies of the party. We would swim and catch crabs. And clams—you could gather buckets and buckets of them. I can recall, as a little lad of about seven or eight years of age, eating twenty-eight small clams at a sitting. [FJ]

Going to Market

Westminster was our main point, once they got enough roads to get out. They sold butter and eggs on the market; and I think it was more or less of a community centre. You knew pretty well everybody in Surrey and Langley and Ladner; and they all congregated at the Westminster market in the early days. Myself, I've often walked a cow in to Westminster to be sold at the market. You'd start off before daylight. [JB]

And the market was a great occasion, too, for any settlers' children allowed to accompany their parents. It was held on Friday mornings, down by the wharves in the centre of the city, where there was an open space, a natural place for a market. The Royal Engineers had named it Lytton Square. In 1892 the city put most of the business under cover in a large shed just to the west of Market Wharf.

It was built right over the river on piling, and had a tin roof. It was right where Eaton's parking lot is now. Where Eaton's itself is now there was a big stable. I would say it would have held 140 or 150 horses. They'd come over on the morning ferry and feed them there. But lots of times you couldn't get all the horses in. [DC]

Horses travel from four to six miles an hour, depending on the vehicle and the state of the road; so anyone in the Langley area would have to set out late on Thursday night. The people who lived beside the Yale Road in Surrey could hear them going by all night long.

The farmers of Halls Prairie had a choice of either the old Semiahmoo Trail or the Coast Meridian, which ran due north to the Yale Road. Even then, going to market could be quite an ordeal.

When I was a boy of about 14 my father said I would have to stay home from school on Friday, because he wanted to go to New Westminster with a load of produce. He had a horse that I had reared from a colt, a great pet of mine, who was quite contented as long as I was near her. She wasn't accustomed to travelling on highways and over the rough bridges that they had in those days, and he wanted me to kind of walk by her head as we crossed the bridges.

There had been tremendous rains, and the old Yale Road across the Serpentine flats was flooded, so that you couldn't drive over safely; in fact, you could hardly see the tops of the fence posts. And the Coast Meridian, which was built at that time, was in the same condition across the Nicomekl flats. So we had to come down the Campell River Road to the Semiahmoo Trail. It meandered up the hill on not too heavy a grade, then down the other side to Elgin. That was the only way we could get across. There was no flooding down near the mouth of the river.

We had left home at one o'clock in the morning, and when we reached Elgin the old drawbridge across the Nicomekl River was open. So my father called on a gentleman who lived close by to know what he should do, and the man told him, "We left the bridge open to let a boat through for logs last night. It jammed, and we couldn't get it closed. You'll have to take my private road across my property." He had a private bridge across the Nicomekl River. The boats went through the draw bridge but not as far as his bridge.

"Go right down through my yard," he said, "and when you get out on the flats you'll find places where the turf has been cup up, and there'll be holes. Don't get into one of those holes, whatever you do, because they're almost bottomless. Use the rails from the fence, or anything you can find. But you'll have to take your load off."

We had to unload twice before we reached a road. We spread the produce out on canvas, got the team and wagon across the rails, and reloaded on the other side. We came out to the Kensington and Mud Bay road, turned left and got back to the old road across the flats. We went up Woodwards Hill, west on the new McLellan Road to the Scott Road, and

reached the ferry at South Westminster—we called it Brownsville then—just before eight o'clock in the morning. A terrific trip. [FJ]

Brownsville was quite a little settlement by then. There were two or three hotels and stores, and a livery stable, where travellers could hire a horse and buggy for a trip up the valley. In the earlier days the only way to get across the river was to pay someone to take you over in a rowboat or canoe. In 1883, however, the proprietor of one of the hotels started operating a small steam ferry, which he called the K de K *after his son-in-law, a man called Knyvett de Knyvett. It crossed every two hours and could take only two teams and rigs at a time. At least a farmer wouldn't have to unload his produce into a rowboat. Six years later the city of New Westminster put on a bigger ferry, called the* Surrey, *that ran until 1904, when the combined road and railway bridge was opened.*

The ferry used to be down where Leckie's tannery is now at South Westminster. They'd start at seven on this side and half past seven on the other side; and I often wonder there was never any accidents. The farmers would come on there with young horses, and they'd be rearing up if the water was rough. And their heads would be right up to the other fellow's box. If one team started backing up, all they had behind them was a chain.

The only accident I ever seen was the farmer's fault. The ferry used to land about 100 yards east of the market. There was an old hotel there: the Telegraph Hotel, they called it. Used to have a big sign out in front. I can see it yet: one of these beer mugs, you know, with "5¢" on it. Well, this old fellow drove up there to have his last beer before he went home, and the train came along. The old mare got scared, and she ran down. The ferry wasn't there, so into the river she went.

He had a 100 lb. sack of sugar, I remember, and two sacks of flour. The fishermen went out and got the wagon and harness pulled off the mare with gaff hooks.

Quite a few came on the riverboats. The *Ramona* used to leave Chilliwack one morning and go back the next day. The *Beaver* would leave the next day and go back the next day. They would have maybe 20, 30, 40 carcasses of beef and veal. They'd land them right at the market, and the deckhands packed it all up and hung it up.

Then there were several little farmers down on Lulu Island, and they'd row up to the market with a crate of chickens and a few dozen eggs; the same from Barnston Island and along there. An awful lot of them came in rowboats. There were no gas boats then. [DC]

John Gillis and his family lived near the end of the Hjorth Road, where the Barnston Island ferry is today. They called their boat 'the company boat'.

There were two or three families had an interest in it. There were two pairs of oars, and on market day three or sometimes four could go, depending on what they had in the way of produce. It would take a couple of hours, I would say, to go down, and anywhere from three to five hours coming back, depending on the time of year. If a freshet was on, it was pretty hard going back. Sometimes they'd get a tow from a tugboat. The tugboats were very friendly in those days. If they saw a man rowing, and they were going up that way, they'd take his line and tow him up.

The next door neighbours had a horse and wagon, and they never used a boat. The main reason we did was because we didn't have a horse until quite few years later. And then no wagon. Things were really tough in those days.

A tremendous lot of people came by water. They used to land at what they called the Market Slip—just a ramp down to the river from the market building. They carried their stuff up the slip into the market, and then they were in business.

It was a great big building built out over the river on piles; and along one wall was stalls for the farmers. They'd all be filled up, pretty well. You had to pay a little fee—not very much—if the market clerk got around to collect. If he didn't, why, you didn't pay it, that's all. [WG]

There was a big square where all the rigs were, and T. J. Trapp used to have these livestock sales there. There'd be 20 or 30 horses, and maybe 30 or 40 milk cows. He'd sell

them by auction. Some of them horses were there every week. They'd be kickers, or something. I used to get so mad at my dad. He'd go out and buy a horse, and the darn thing would be so balky. We'd take it up to the old ranch and try to break it in. Then he'd trade it off for a cow or something. [DC]

My mother got a stall at the market, and she retailed her butter and eggs. She was an excellent butter maker, and she built herself quite a reputation. She had customers from as far as Vancouver. She was quite elated about that. [WG]

A lot of people from Aldergrove went in with apples; 50 to 60 cents a box for apples. There was a fellow with flowers; he lived in Burnaby. And then there were ladies from Ladner all the time with honey and butter. [DC]

There were potatoes, and stuff like that. Not much handicrafts and sewing like there is now. You'd find maybe the odd one doing a little home cooking, and there was a stall set up for that. But it was mostly farm produce. [WG]

A farmer would kill a cow, or he'd kill a pig. He'd drive into Westminster and sell it there; get 5 or 6 cents a pound for dressed pork, 4 or 5 cents for dressed beef. [DC]

You brought whatever you had—your hogs, small pigs or chickens—live chickens. You put them on the floor there and stood around; and the Chinese would come. And when you got your price you let them go. We used to sell weaners six weeks old. Just put them in boxes. They'd go about $3 apiece in those days. [WG]

Then there were long racks where the farmers were selling their meat wholesale, maybe 20 carcasses of beef or 30 to 40 pigs. The Chinamen used to come from Vancouver and buy 70 to 100 crates of live chickens, so much a pound.

When I was about seven years old my father had a stall in Westminster market. About seven of us had stalls in them days. They'd be over six by eight, with racks all around them. You hung your meat up there. Lots of time we'd get rid of two beef, seven or eight lambs and maybe a pork or two. Just imagine, a hind quarter of lamb: $1.25 to $1.50; front quarter 75¢.

But them days it wasn't little pieces. The European Hotel from Vancouver used to come over and buy a side. We supplied the St. Ann's Convent and St. Mary's Hospital. The nuns would come down every Friday morning. One of them had an old chap with a little boy's wagon, and he'd fill that right up. They'd get a week's supply.

We had a contract with Belyea & Company; 10¢ a parcel and they would deliver anywhere in town. After the market was over they used to come in with their express wagon, and we had the stuff made up into 30 or 40 parcels.

So it was a very busy four or five hours. We'd leave the old homestead at 12 at night, and catch the first ferry in the morning at seven. We'd get into the market and start about half past seven. Customers would come down; and it was pretty well over at 12. After we tidied up we could start for home maybe on the 4 o'clock ferry, and it would be twelve at night when we'd get home.

So I only got to school three days a week, really. By the time you went back to school, you'd be discouraged. And that went on for years. [DC]

TRANSITIONS

"It wasn't a bad life," commented William Cormack. "You couldn't sell it to anybody now, but we didn't mind it."

Two great wars and at least three recessions later, it's hard to look back at the simplicity and assurance of that life without making a romantic myth out of it—even of the hardships, which were many. People were so much less self-conscious than we are today, even when it came to growing up and getting jobs. Beginning in the late 1890's and running through the decade that followed, British Columbia was experiencing a tremendous economic expansion. There was work for everybody—at any rate for men and boys.

Girls were expected to stay home and help mother, until they got married. If they were somewhat ambitious, or wanted simply to escape, they could move to the towns and cities where there was plenty of work for them in stores and offices, or with well-to-do families. If they got through high school, they could train to be teachers.

Boys who grew up on the homesteads would acquire all kinds of skills almost as a matter of course. At an early age they'd be herding cows and milking them, getting to know how to handle horses, and maybe oxen. They could ride them and plough with them. They knew about haymaking and getting in crops. They could handle an axe and a saw, and often got to be competent woodsmen.

Pete Lagacé recalled visiting a lumber camp and finding two boys, 12 and 14, falling timber for $1.25 a thousand. "There was no power saws," he said, "and them kids was cutting these logs all by hand with cross-cuts. Big cork shoes on, just like working men, you know."

In the late 1870's a little orphan boy was having to earn his living at an earlier age than that. Fred Clark was his name, and one hopes his case was unusual. His father had been murdered when he was an infant, and his mother, who was an Indian, died three years later. So Fred lived with a man by the name of Lewis Dodson, who was the first settler on Barnston Island, and by the age of 8 was helping to cut cordwood which they sold in New Westminster for $2 a cord. They were very poor.

So poor, in fact, that when he was only nine years old he left and took the river boat up to Yale, and went to stay with some friends who lived in Spences Bridge. The following year when he came back down the canyon, the whole area was alive with the railway builders. And when this kid enquired what the blasting was for, he was told, "For the dry land steamboat."

At the age of 11 Fred was working in a cannery, and then he got a job on one of the riverboats as a deckhand, at 80¢ for a 15-hour day. At 14, he was down in the State of Washington picking hops at $1 a box. And so it went. Certainly, it was an unusual childhood, but perhaps it says something about the times. Eventually, as a young adult, Fred was able to settle down near Brownsville for the rest of his long life, and built boats for fishermen.

There was no such dire necessity in Pete Lagacé's early life. As we know, he belonged to a large, closely knit French-Canadian family, and was well looked after. And yet, as with any enterprising boy, then and now, he liked to make himself useful, and even earn a little money.

My first job was with a survey party. The surveyor had camped at our place; it was a kind of headquarters. Next year he worked up at the head of Pitt Lake, and my brother, Frank, was working for him. It was during the holidays, and my mother got this surveyor to take me along. I wasn't very big, you know. I think I was only about eight years old. And all

I did was make tea and pack out the tea pot, and fool around the camp. The next year I went with other surveyors, and I kept that up for several years. In the wintertime we'd always come back and go to school.

I think I was 12 when I quit school; I didn't want to go any more. I was pretty smart, and my mother sent me down to St. Louis College. She wanted to make a doctor out of me. I would rather have been an engineer. Well, I got down there, and, by golly, I didn't want to go to college. I'd meet some of them old-timers—like old lumberjacks and cow punchers—and I'd say, "My mother wants me to go to college."

"What does a man want to go to college for? They's only sissies does that."

I didn't have any money, but the Station Agent at New Westminster was a friend of my mother, and this fellow's son gave me enough to buy a ticket. But instead of going home, I went up to a cow camp out of Clinton. And when I got there they said, "Well, by golly, you better let your mother know where you're at."

One wonders what they did with this 12-year-old. Did they send him home to an anxious mother? Pete didn't say. More than likely they let him stay, while he made himself useful around the ranch. Come summer, he went out again with a survey party.

Finally I got to be a picket man. I think I was about 14 years old. They used to pay your expenses and wages from the day you left to the day you went back—$3 a day, which was big money in them days. And the later years, after I'd been through surveying, sometimes I'd stay and help on the ranches and come back home before Christmas.

In Williams Lake he acquired a pair of high boots and a big hat. He was on his way to becoming a cowboy.

Again, it was not necessity that made him reject a college education. It was simply the lure of the untrammeled, open air life he was used to. But from all that we've heard, it would seem that not a few bright little boys and girls on homesteads found it a struggle merely to complete the elementary grades, for no other reason than that their labour was needed. For them, it was not so much a question of how old they were as of how strong they were.

In those days the transition from childhood to adulthood was natural and inevitable, fostered by all the opportunities for work with which they were surrounded. No one even gave it much thought. Much less were they concerned with that in-between period we have labelled adolescence.

As a rancher from the Nicola once said, "There was no teenage life in my day. When I was 15 I had to take the responsibility of a man. I was breaking horses and responsible for cattle, and all that stuff, because they were short of help in this country. We were men. We were kids. We were men again."

Notes on the Interviews

All interviews were recorded by Imbert Orchard during 1963 and 1964. The tapes are held by the Sound and Moving Image Division, Provincial Archives of British Columbia (Imbert Orchard/CBC Vancouver Collection).

Biographical details about Bert Williams, Cornelius Kelleher and Pete Lagacé are found in Part One.

AD Albert Drinkwater (b. 1888). He came out from Ontario with his parents in 1888. They settled in South Langley for several years, then moved to Surrey. His parents were from England, and his father, Joseph, was a carpenter. Albert was a grease monkey at 15, and was able to describe in detail the logging industry in Surrey and Langley.

AH Alfred Hawkins (b. 1879). His father came out from England with the Royal Engineers in 1859, and eventually took up farming on the edge of Matsqui Prairie in the Mt. Lehman area, where his son grew up.

BP Beulah Probert (b. about 1891). Her father, John Cornock, bought his property in Glen Valley in 1884, then returned to Ontario. He brought his family out in 1900. She is a sister of William Cornock.

CB Joseph Clarke Brannick (1897–1967). His father, Joseph, came out from Ontario in 1882 and took up a homestead in East Chilliwack. He married a local school teacher. Clarke was still operating the family farm when interviewed.

DC Dan Cummings (b. about 1890). His parents came from Prince Edward Island and took up a homestead in S.E. Langley. His father, Roderick, was in the butchery business, and his son assisted him from an early age. They supplied meat to the New Westminster market and the logging camps.

FJ Fred (W. E.) Johnson (b. in mid 1870's). The family were from Nova Scotia, and they lived for a time at Yale, while his father was working as a bridge builder during CPR construction. In 1882 the family settled on Halls Prairie, and Fred later became customs officer at the Whiterock railway depot.

FT Fred Toop (1886–1976). His father, Sampson, came out from Devonshire in 1872 and bought a farm in the Lower Sumas area. Fred, the youngest of his five sons, took it over while he was still in his teens.

GR Guy Richardson (b. 1890). His parents were from England and came to Surrey Centre in 1886. His father, Arthur, eventually went into logging, supplying timber for local mills. Guy married Lucy Bell, daughter of Rev. William Bell, also of Surrey Centre.

IB Ira Biggar (b. 1878). Most of his family were born in Prince Edward Island. His family brought them out to S.E. Langley in 1887, and they settled on what came to be known as Biggars Prairie.

JB John Bothwell (b. ?). His family came into the Tynehead area of N.E. Surrey in 1884. Jack Bothwell was still farming part of the property when interviewed.

JC John Churchland (b. about 1884). The family came out in 1890 and settled at Surrey Centre, where his father, John, operated a store for a number of years. He also tried to run a farm, which his son took over when he was 14.

JF John Fraser (b. 1892). His father, Donald (Dan), came from Quebec and located near Abbotsford, then became customs officer at Huntingdon. John grew up on the homestead.

JK James Kipp (1886–1975). Youngest son of Henry Kipp, who came from Ontario and arrived in the Cariboo via the California mines in 1864. He was one of the original settlers of the Chilliwack district. His farm is now part of the city of Chilliwack.

JM Jenny Medd. Her maiden name was Estey. She was a certified school teacher when she came out from New Brunswick. She taught at Milner for three years.

LR Lucy Richardson (b. 1894). She was a daughter of Rev. William Bell who had come to Surrey Centre in 1884. She married Guy Richardson. Her parents were both from Ontario.

MB Margaret Blackstock (b. in 1890's). Sister of Warren Gillis. Their father, John Gillis, came out from Prince Edward Island in 1883. Margaret grew up on the farm in N. Surrey near the river.

MS Margaret Stewart (b. 1876). Her father was David W. Brown. He brought his family out from Iowa in 1878, and they eventually settled on Halls Prairie. She was a sister of the twins, Peter and David Brown, who started what is now Redwoods Park.

NP Nellie Patriquin (1887–1976) Daughter of Cory Ryder. Several Ryder brothers came out to the Cariboo from Ontario in gold rush days and were engaged in freighting. Cory settled in the Chilliwack Valley just east of Mt. Shannon in 1872, and this was the family's first home. Nellie was a school teacher and greatly interested in local history.

RW Richard (Dick) Whiteside (b. in the 1890's). His father, Guy, was the son of a judge in India, and his parents came out from England in 1888. They homesteaded on the Yale Road in Surrey, where it was mostly thick forest, but his father was not cut out to be a farmer and had to find a number of other jobs.

WC William Cormock (b. about 1889). His father, John, bought his property in Glen Valley in 1884, then returned to Ontario. He brought his family out in 1900 and ran a successful dairy farm. His son, William, a brother of Beulah Probert, was still running the farm when interviewed.

WG Warren Gillis (b. 1896). Brother of Margaret Blackstock. Their father, John, came out from Prince Edward Island in 1883 and was joined five years later by his fiancée. They were married at Tynehead. The family farm was in N. Surrey near the river.

WM William McClughan (b. about 1879). His father, Samuel, was from Belfast, and settled in N. Langley near the Surrey border in 1877. Bill was still operating the family farm when interviewed.

WR Willena May Reid (1883–1963). Her father was Daniel Nicholson. They farmed at Mt. Lehman, and their house was a centre for others from Prince Edward Island.

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